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STUART OF DUNLEATH  
COLLECTION  
OF  
BRITISH AUTHORS.  
VOL. CCIX.

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STUART OF DUNLEATH BY CAROLINE NORTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



COLLECTION

OF

BRITISH AUTHOR

FOR CLER

STREET OF PRINCESTON BY CAROLINE NORTHON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.



# STUART OF DUNLEATH.

A Story of the Present Time.

BY

THE HON. CAROLINE NORTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE DREAM," &c.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BERNH. TAUCHNITZ JUN.

1851.



# STUART OF DUNFRAVIE

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TO  
HER MAJESTY,  
SOPHIA FREDERIKA MATILDA,  
QUEEN OF THE NETHERLANDS.

MADAM,

In availing myself of your Majesty's permission to dedicate these volumes to you, I may, perhaps, be permitted a few words by way of preface.

When an eloquent English writer of former times — the celebrated Jeremy Taylor — dedicated his "Holy Dying" to the Earl of Carberry, he said: "Because I much honour you, and because I would do honour to myself, I have written your name in the entrance of my book."

The sentiment Jeremy Taylor expressed is one which should inspire all dedications, and I can with the utmost sincerity affirm that it is the soul of my dedication to the Queen of Holland.



If an author should be happy in his dedication, who knows that whatever is valuable in his book will be surely valued; that whatever is true in description, or noble in feeling, or tender in sentiment, will find quick and ready response in the heart of the patron of his work; then I may well rest content, since it is not a pleasant chance, but an approved certainty, that I shall find in your Majesty, with an ardent sympathy, the most competent and indulgent of judges.

Nor can it be otherwise than a great addition to my pleasure, that, from your Majesty's complete familiarity with the English language, my heart will need no translator to convey its thoughts to yours.

The power of writing has always been to me an intense pleasure; it has been the best of my resources in hours of gloom; while the name of a writer in my native land is the only happy boast of my life.

Holding, as I do, that that power entails a certain responsibility, I have not ventured to present to my countrymen, or to offer to your Majesty, a mere romance the weaving of idle thoughts to amuse idle hours. I have endeavoured, at least, to write with a distinct purpose of usefulness. To illustrate the working of particular faults on our own destinies, and



the destinies of others, and at the same time to uphold a wider toleration than we are generally willing to accord to such faults as do not happen to be those of our own individual nature.

If I have failed in making this purpose clear in my story, it is not for want of pains, but for want of ability; for, carelessly, no part of this book has been written. Nor will I allow that pains and purpose are thrown away upon a work of fiction; since, from the early time of fables, Fiction has ever held the dignity of Ambassador from the Court of Truth.

I have done, therefore, what I could, in the line of writing which I have attempted. And since authorship is also a species of sovereignty; since a writer of any power is a governor of such hearts as his writings can reach; and thus I, as an author, govern a few hearts, while your Majesty governs many: I do but copy the good old custom of simple days, which bade the petty rulers of the earth bring tribute to the more mighty, and bring my tribute in the shape of this book.

I do not know that there remains any observation for me to make, unless it be one which more especially affects your private sympathies. When last I saw



your Majesty, you were mourning a child of extraordinary beauty and promise. It may interest you to know that, in the description of the death of a child in the course of these volumes, the instance of early piety and resignation which prompted it to utter a prayer, instead of a vain call for rescue, is not an invention, but a fact taken from real life.

With earnest wishes for your Majesty's welfare and happiness, I now close this letter of dedication, assuring your Majesty, with little formality, but much respect, that I feel glad and thankful at being permitted to offer you this testimony of my gratitude and my affection.

Your Majesty's

Devoted Servant,

CAROLINE ELIZABETH SARAH NORTON.

LONDON,

May, 1851.



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# STUART OF DUNLEATH.

## CHAPTER I.

### A Letter.

THE post had just come in.

A common-place every-day occurrence; connected in the general mind with pasted stamps and Christmas-boxes. No longer the romantic event it used to be, when, with piquant irregularity, unexpected messengers alighted from their reeking steeds at the gates of fair castles, and presented on bended knee, some solitary missive confided to their charge. A mere matter of course; not to be thought of in any other light.

And yet it is a startling reflection, that, at a particular hour of the morning, there is to thousands of the millions a second waking as it were; a waking of the heart after the waking of the body. Thousands are astir, each in his separate home; all occupied with a similar interest; the chief, perhaps the only point of sympathy, in their various lives.

The post is come in. "A noun of multitude, signifying many." The epistles which lay huddled together



in the mail-bag, have been sorted and delivered according to their several addresses. They have been scattered along the rows of houses like seed in a ploughed furrow, and according to the seed sown, is the crop raised; tears for some, and smiles for others; joy and grief, like unseen spirits, entering with the post.

The letters are come.

That far-travelled treasure, the ship-letter, with its news from distant climes: — the love-letter; the remittance, or refusal to remit; the attorney's letter, with a threat of "ulterior measures," terrible in its vagueness; the maternal counsel; the keen and bitter reproach; the half-jesting, half-scandalous gossip, immediately to be repeated and multiplied as though a stereotyped edition were called for; the vain appeal, written with anguish, blotted with tears; the letter of empty compliment or ceremony; the black-edged, black-sealed, ominous-looking announcement of the death of a friend or relation — all these have arrived at their destination.

How troubled is the stream of life's waters as the spirit of the hour passes over its face. If we could look into those homes whose blank windows and closed doors wear so exactly the same aspect as they did an hour ago, what changes we might behold! There sits a matron weeping; her gentle girls are weeping too; they rose cheerfully this morning; all was as usual; the morning-prayer, the household task,



the plans for the morrow; but the storm has swept over them. They know themselves widowed and orphaned — since the post came in.

In the next house, hasty orders are given, preparations are being made for a sudden journey. Death, which came as a certainty to that other small family circle, only threatens here. The absent son lies sick of a fever — delirious, perhaps dying; but there is hope. Are the horses come? how slowly the orders seem obeyed: all has been hurry, terror, and confusion, since the post came in.

Close by the shade is the sunshine; look into the dwelling opposite. A blushing girl is there, with her parents. She would fain cover face with her hands, but they are playfully held by her father; smilingly, and yet tenderly, he watches her downcast eyes, through whose shy lids his glance seems to pierce. The lover has proposed: he is accepted: she is happy, though she is to leave home. Home! she has had a vision of a “home of her own” since the post came in.

Despair, ruin, disgrace. The party-wall perhaps, alone divides her from a house where these have alighted, to crush some bankrupt speculator. He has received a letter, and read it. He stares wildly on vacancy.

“His eyes

Are with his heart, and that is far away,”

In fancy, he beholds the face of his daughter, innocent,



dimpled, child-like. He sees his sons, handsome youths just entering manhood; he sees their mother, who has been his good true wife for near thirty years. Familiar faces glide along the blank wall opposite, like figures from some dreadful magic-lantern. He sits, now perplexed and trembling; now still and stony: there has been but one idea clear to him, the idea of SUICIDE — since the post came in.

Even to those who have not their part in the morning's distribution, the post-hour is an hour of interest. How often has it been waited for with sick heart-throbs, with bitter restless anxiety. How often, gliding by in barrenness, has it cast a shade of unutterable dejection on the dial of a sunless day. How often has its very emptiness done more to convince the reason of change, and loss, and wrong, and neglect, than all the jarring words that ever were penned. Reader! did you ever wait, longingly, feverishly, for the coming in of the post? If you have, I pity you. If you have not, I pity you yet more; for, of anxiety may truly be declared, what a French author has written of love: —

“Qui que tu sois, violà ton maitre:  
Il l'est, le fut; ou le doit être!”

On the morning from which this story dates its beginning, the post had just come in, in the retired village of Aspendale. The contents of the bag consisted principally of letters “for Lady Raymond, Aspen-



dale Park," which were put in a little leather pouch of their own, that they might travel in proper state from the village post-office to the hall door. There, the leather pouch being delivered to a footman in livery, and unlocked by a superior being who wore no livery, its contents were consigned to the lady's-maid, to be carried into the sacred precincts of "my lady's dressing-room."

Into that darkly-curtained and richly-carpeted apartment, the abigail entered with cautious tread. Avoiding the peck of a very large yellow-crested cockatoo; slightly noticing a crimson lory and a green monkey, who seemed to be old acquaintances; and dexterously steering her way through such shoals of little tables, foot-stools, and easy chairs, as would have completely barred the passage to any one less accustomed to that difficult navigation, she reached the sofa where her lady was reclining and laid the letters on the table; saying, as she did so, with the interest of one who had been many years in the same service, "a letter from Madras among them, my lady."

As the letters were brought in, a fair, fragile child of nine years old, rose from the stool by the sofa; and saying, with a sigh, "post-time, Mamma, we must leave off talking," withdrew to the window, where a Hindoo Ayah was arranging some new toys and sitting down on a low ottoman by the nurse's side, conversed with her in whispers. Even without the pre-



sence of the native servant, a stranger could have told, at a glance, that the occupant of that room had been in India. The peculiar furniture, the japanned cabinets, the tropical birds, the knick-knacks in sandal wood, ebony, and ivory, the profusion of shawls and drape-ries, un-English in their look and texture; and still more, perhaps, the appearance of the delicate English child — all told the same tale.

Look well at that child, reader, for she is our heroine.

Pale, tranquil, with slight limbs, and bright spiritual eyes full of that peculiar expression, at once wild, shy, and gentle, which the French denominate *fauve*, with a general air of feebleness and langour, redeemed by a look of thought and intellect in the straight fine forehead, and a certain degree of pride in the small melancholy mouth; a little taller than children of her age usually are; her hair a little longer too than is common, and plaited by the skilful fingers of the Ayah in countless slender braids; such was Eleanor Raymond.

If you had met her out walking, muffled in her bonnet and shawl, you would not have noticed her. You met a pale, lady-like child, and that was all; but if you had seen her in a room, above all, if you had spoken to her, she would have remained for ever shrined in that strange gallery of pictures which memory gradually collects. Your eye would never again



have rested on any group of young children, without recalling to mind the child you once saw in Lady Raymond's dressing-room.

Little Eleanor sate still, and conversed kindly with her Ayah, but it was plain she was only half attentive to the efforts made to entertain her, and she glanced restlessly from time to time towards the sofa, as if waiting for the welcome signal of recal.

"I think," at length said she with a sigh, "I am growing too old for toys, Maya; I am very much obliged to Emma Fordyce for this Noah's Ark, but I wish I could give it to some little child; if I knew any little child," added she in a plaintive tone. "I like only the dear elephant, because it reminds me of India and of papa, though there is no palanquin on its back; I wonder if the carpenter could make me a palanquin."

A sob from the lady who reclined on the sofa startled Eleanor; swift, gentle, noiseless, she flew across the room. "Mamma, dear Mamma, what is the matter? Is there bad news? Is my brother Godfrey's ship — wrecked? Is papa ill?"

Lady Raymond kissed her daughter, and asked, in a low, trembling voice;

"Should you remember your papa if you were to see him?"

The little girl trembled also, and stood for a mi-



nute without speaking, gazing on the joy that sparkled in her mother's tearful eyes: then she spoke rapidly, eagerly, clasping her small hands together.

"If I remember him! Oh! dear Mamma, how could I forget him? Sometimes I dream of the day he blessed me and bid me good-bye. He blessed you too, Mamma, and told you to write often; and take care of your health. I remember India very well, though I was a young child; I remember" —

Eleanor paused.

She was going to tell her mother she remembered her baby-brother; but she remembered also how her mother had wailed and wept when that babe was laid in its Indian grave, far away. With tender instinct she stopped, coloured, and showed her consciousness of colouring, by the quick graceful movement with which she laid the back of her little hand against her glowing cheek, then, twining her arms round her mother's neck, she said,

"Is papa coming home? I am sure that is the news; is he coming, Mamma — at last?"

"He *is* coming, my own little Eleanor; he *is* coming at last — thank God."

And, folded in a close embrace, the happy mother and child rejoiced together, sobbing with glad excitement. The post had come in — and brought to the mother one hope, and a thousand memories; to the child, one memory, and hopes as countless as the motes that



dance in a sunbeam. And truly, two more helpless beings than that invalid woman and her fragile daughter, never waited the coming of a father and protector.

## CHAPTER II.

### Expectation.

LADY RAYMOND had been twice married. Her previous union had proved as unhappy as the present was fortunate. The pennyless daughter of a half-pay officer, her exquisite beauty had early captivated the heart of Captain Marsden, who wooed and won her in a period of five weeks. Neither could be presumed to know much of the other's disposition in this time, and no two dispositions could have been more dissimilar. Captain Marsden was a man of nice honour, and generous feelings, but his temper was stern, imperious, and irritable; he had a constitution of iron, revered punctuality, and had a secret (and very unsailor-like) contempt for women in general, and for fragile and helpless women in particular. He desired to find in his wife the qualities he valued in his crew, activity and obedience; in his home, the exact order which is observed on board a man-of-war. His home and his wife were precisely contrary to these pre-conceived notions, and on the rock of this double disappointment the barque of affection was wrecked. Fear, and



a sense of injury, took the place of love in the young wife's heart, who had been the spoilt idol of her surviving parent, and the beauty of a garrisoned sea-port town; weariness, anger, and something very near akin to disgust, took its place in the heart of Captain Marsden. Their mutual existence was embittered, and so continued till a rapid fever carried off Captain Marsden in the prime of life, leaving his widow with a little boy to educate, and a very narrow income.

Her beauty and gentleness attracted as many suitors as the obscure retirement in which she lived rendered possible; but her timid heart long dreaded to venture on a second choice; and when, at length, General Sir John Raymond proposed for the beautiful young widow, it was with a feeling in which fear contended with love, and many an anxious vow never to offend or disobey him, that she once more pronounced the fatal "yes," and became again and under happier auspices — a wife.

The strength of her good resolves was not destined to be tried. Sir John Raymond, himself the widower of the haughtiest, cleverest, and most managing of women, found a charm in the very foibles of his new bride. Her gentleness, her helplessness, were pleasanter to him than the somewhat tyrannical stand-alone-ism of Lady Raymond the First. There was a disparity in their ages too, which seemed to him to entitle her to indulgence; and when she looked timidly



and anxiously towards him, conscious of some error which Captain Marsden would have sternly reproved, and saw the kind and amused smile with which he met her perplexed glances, she felt a sweet consciousness of being so beloved, that her faults were no longer justly weighed.

She returned that love with a sort of tender worship; and something like wonder at her being held worthy to inspire attachment in a man so superior to all whom she had ever known. Life, which had threatened to be full of storms that terrified and depressed her, wore the tranquil brightness of a summer's day; and the care of her little boy, Godfrey Marsden, which had been a happiness full of fitful alarm, and oppressive responsibility, became a source of maternal pride and security; shared as it now was, with the generous-hearted protector, in whose strength there was no sternness, in whose love, no tyranny.

As the boy grew, his character and inclination seemed alike to point to the choice of his father's profession; and Lady Raymond, with a mixture of awe and triumph, saw her son stand before her in a midshipman's uniform; his sword by his side; exhibiting in his frank courageous countenance something of the hard determination which she remembered in her husband's face: an expression she had admired, as bold and manly, while he was yet only a suitor for her



hand, but which experience had taught her to watch with shrinking timidity in after years.

With steady kindness, Sir John Raymond did his best for the little fellow he first recollected seeing with a black crape round his hat, an orphan under very helpless tutelage; and Godfrey Marsden creditably pursued the career pointed out for him. His courage and obedience had already obtained favourable notice from his superior officers; and if he was less popular with his companions, that might arise from a gravity and reserve unusual at his age, and utterly unwelcome in the larking, riotous, merry world of a midshipman's mess-room.

An important command in India having been bestowed on Sir John, he sailed for that land of the tropics, accompanied by his gentle wife: and at first their happiness seemed without a cloud: but after some time, Lady Raymond's health, which had never been robust, completely gave way; and to this was superadded grief for the loss of two or three little delicate children, who seemed only born to die. Sir John Raymond's popularity also declined; reforms were projected and introduced; and the usual fate of those who are entrusted with the execution of measures abroad, which are so smoothly planned at home, became his. The odium of all which was unwelcome in the new arrangements was attributed to him, while for that which was satisfactory he obtained no credit.



Harassed by public struggles and private anxieties, he thought of retiring from his arduous position, and returning with his wife and surviving children, from the sultry and oppressive climate where he vainly laboured to serve his fellow-creatures, to the pure air of his native land; while his ministerial friends at home, convinced that the fault could not lie in their scheme (on the perfection of which they had all complimented each other) but that "somehow or other Raymond must have managed very foolishly," thought of recalling him. The difficulty, however, of finding a man able to fill his place, prevented this insult from being added to the numerous vexations which already oppressed him, while a high and chivalrous sense of duty equally restrained him from voluntarily throwing up his command.

Meanwhile his infant son died; and the long and dangerous fever which this great affliction brought on Lady Raymond, made her husband resolve immediately to send her with little Eleanor to England. A friend was commissioned to choose and prepare a residence for the helpless object of his anxious love, and Aspendale Park was taken.

At their melancholy parting, Sir John Raymond for the first time wished his wife had been more capable of comprehending his affairs and anxieties; there was much he would have said, which the character and understanding of the woman he had married, rendered



superfluous or impossible, and which was checked back under that conviction. He could neither explain the past, nor urge hope for the future, nor theorise on the education of his little daughter, to the feeble being who was about to be separated from him. He could only entreat of her to write constantly, and to not let his child forget him; accompany her on board to see that her cabin was furnished with every comfort and luxury for the voyage, and then return with a heavy heart to land — the land which now held, for him, only the graves of his children.

Lady Raymond returned to England a confirmed invalid; her natural indolence increased tenfold by the relaxing climate she had lived in; and by a certain sadness, which made inactivity more complete as a habit, than it was, even with her, while yet the elasticity of youth and happiness remained. She lived a torpid life, feebly sunned by the distant hope of Sir John's return. The only exertion she was ever known to make, was that of writing letters to him. Very long, and very foolish, were the letters Lady Raymond wrote, and such as a stranger would have thought it impossible to wade through; yet they were read many times by him to whom they were addressed, and always before he broke the seal of any other epistle: and the proud, intellectual, distinguished General, whose services were so valuable to his native country, and whose position was so brilliant in his land of



exile, sighed for the time when, the noonday labour of existence being over, he might spend its sunset and decline with his wife and child, in his distant English home.

No wonder that Lady Raymond watched anxiously for his arrival after nearly four years' absence! No wonder she roused herself to walk down the lime avenue in the park, and strained her eyes for the expected glimpse of a carriage through the trees, in a distant turn of the road. And no wonder that, after watching till all grew dim and indistinct in the twilight, forgetful of her usual fears of evening dew and fatigue, she called, in a broken disappointed tone, to little Eleanor, to accompany her back to the house, and wept as she sat down in the large comfortable dressing-room, which had never seemed cheerless till that evening.

### CHAPTER III.

#### Eleanor's Guardian.

THE Gazette of the next morning contained the following piece of intelligence, which was read with melancholy interest by hundreds to whom he was personally unknown: —

“Arrived H.M.S. ‘Albion,’ from Madras, having on board the body of General Sir John Raymond, K.C.B., who died on his passage home.”



Lady Raymond did not get the papers till the day after their delivery in town. She spent that day, therefore, as she had spent the preceding, in anxious expectation of the arrival of her husband. The feverish and restless suspense exhausted her, and towards evening she flung herself on a sofa and fell asleep. She woke with a start; the sound of carriage-wheels rapidly driving up to the door was heard; and little Eleanor flew into the room, exclaiming: "Now, Mamma, here is papa! here is papa!" The door-bell rang; the bark of the house-dog was answered by the little spaniel, which jumped off its cushion and ran into the hall; servants with lights passed to and fro; all was bustle and confusion.

Lady Raymond disentangled herself from the shawls with which the care of her attendants had encumbered the sofa, and went trembling down stairs.

A gentleman entered at the open door. He was a stranger. She looked eagerly into the dark space beyond him, but no one followed. The servant closed the hall-door, and opened that of the library, into which they mechanically entered.

"Sir John Raymond is scarcely well enough to travel," said the stranger, in a low voice, and with a slight Scotch accent; "in fact he is very ill; and he sent me —"

"Is there a letter? have you no letter?" said Lady Raymond, wildly interrupting him.



"I have not;" replied he, with some hesitation.

She fixed her eyes with an imploring stare on his face, and as he attempted to continue, she exclaimed:

"He 's dead! If he had been alive, he would have written, if it was only to say, I cannot come! Ah God! you are trying to break it to me; but I feel it here!" and pressing her hand against her heart, she sank with hysterical sobs to the ground.

The stranger raised her, and rang for assistance. Several terrified servants crowded in.

"Carry Lady Raymond to her own room, and send for a doctor; and, stay, is there any friend, any neighbour, within reach, who could be a comfort at this terrible time?"

"No, Sir," said the lady's maid. "My Lady didn't take much to the people about here; she didn't see company."

"There 's old Mr. Fordyce, the Rector, father to Miss Emma that's as good as my Lady's daughter-in-law," said the housekeeper.

Lady Raymond moaned, and half opened her eyes.

"Carry her up stairs; tell her I will see her in the morning; and send for Mr. Fordyce," said the stranger.

No one thought of disputing the orders so unexpectedly given, by a gentleman whom they had never seen before. Lady Raymond was borne to her own room; a messenger was dispatched for Mr. Fordyce,



and the apothecary, who lived within a stone's throw of the rectory; and without further ceremony the stranger was left alone. The gloomy darkness of the library was only relieved by a single candle, which one of the servants had left on the table; the door of the room remained open. The stranger took two or three turns through the apartment, and then re-seating himself, covered his face with his hands. Little Eleanor stole quietly in, and advanced towards him.

"What has happened, and where is papa?" faltered she.

"Child," said the stranger, solemnly, as he took her hand, "your father is in heaven, if ever man went there!"

Little Eleanor wept and trembled while he explained to her that her father had left India in bad health, and had died at sea; that she was now an orphan; and that he, David Stuart, who had been Sir John's friend and secretary, was to be her guardian, and had come to Aspendale in the vain hope of being able to break the dreadful news better by word of mouth, than by writing, to her poor mother.

As the little girl stood shivering and weeping by his side, David Stuart's soul was pierced with anguish. He took the child in his arms, and spoke to her tenderly of her father's goodness and worth; of the duty of bowing to God's will, of the especial providence over the widow and orphan.



His tone and manner, more than his words, hushed her grief for a while, and she leaned her head silently against his bosom. As he held her there, with a gentle cherishing clasp, he thought of the miserable scene he had witnessed in the death of his friend and benefactor, and the misery he was yet to witness in this home which was to have been the scene of such welcome and rejoicing, where the hope of a happy reunion and calm glad future was for ever blotted out by tears and death. Sorrow overcame him; and with a gush of weeping he kissed the helpless little creature who lay in his arms. She too had been dreaming, in her own childish way, of the desolation which had overtaken her and her mother; of all the joyous preparations they had made in vain.

“Oh! never to see papa again! never again!” sobbed she, “what shall we do! we were so glad in the morning!”

The renewed attempt which he made to sooth her, was interrupted by the entrance of the housekeeper, who inquired whether he would take any refreshment, and whether it was his intention to remain there that night; adding a hope that he would, as “her lady was so delicate, they really thought the blow would be the death of her,” and that she might require to hear the particulars when she became more composed.

“Mr. Fordyce is come, Sir,” said another servant, entering hastily; “he would like to speak with you



before he goes to my lady — he is in the drawing-room; — this way, Sir. What name shall I give?”

“Stuart.”

As the stranger slowly crossed the hall, and ascended the staircase, he heard the order to prepare an apartment for “the gentleman who brought the news,” answered by an interrogative observation from the chamber-maid, that “the room which had been got ready for Sir John, was in order — wouldn’t that do?” and the housekeeper’s reply, “Lord bless me, girl, what put such a thought into your head! I am going this moment to shut the shutters of that room, and lock it up for good and all. Come, Miss Eleanor — home away to bed; — bless me, how the poor child has cried. Put her to bed, nurse — take her away and put her to bed, poor lamb. She’ll sleep as sound as if her father had come home; it’s the nature of her age. Get ready the blue room on the ground floor, next the library, for Mr. What’s-his-name; and, John, bring a tray for some wine and water; — really one scarcely knows what one’s doing, hearing things in this sudden way.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

## Death in Exile.

THERE was a desolate silence at Aspendale the next morning. The window-shutters were closed: every one spoke in whispers; those whose occupation obliged them to move to and fro in the house, did it stealthily and cautiously, as though they feared to wake one who lay in slumber. The stillness and solemn hush of death was there, instead of the jubilee of welcome. The mighty and oppressive silence which follows the falling asleep of those whom no earthly sound shall ever rouse again.

David Stuart sat alone at the breakfast-table. The room had a south-east aspect, and the morning sun shone cheerfully on the objects around him; glowing through the rich crimson draperies of the windows, and lighting some warm Italian landscapes, with which the walls were hung. There was an air of preparation in the apartment, which added to its gaiety, and large vases of flowers had been placed in it by the careful hands of the housekeeper the day that Sir John Raymond was expected. While he looked on these things with a sad and abstracted eye, the butler entered and placed the newspapers on the table. As he listlessly glanced over them, he saw the announcement of Sir John Raymond's death; and though he



had himself accompanied the invalid on his tedious voyage home; though to his ear were confided the last whispers of the dying man; though he had arrived at Aspendale for no other purpose than to break the news of that death to Lady Raymond, he started, as though the intelligence had been unexpected. It is so long, before we become as it were assured of the loss of those we value.

Vague and imperfect as our ideas of that terrible separation, are the first feelings which attend it. We grieve, indeed; but while we grieve, there is a want of reality and certainty in our sorrow. We repeat to ourselves that they are lost — gone — vanished for ever; and even while we repeat it, feel as though they might return. For months, the possibility of writing to them, lingers vaguely in our minds: they seem absent, not buried. We recollect that they are dead, with a burst of weeping, when this mechanical impulse is passed. It is not till lonely seasons have revolved; till joys which they would have shared, anxieties which they might have alleviated, events in which they would have their part, have all been our portion, and ours only; till the grasp of welcome or congratulation has been long unfelt; till the opinions we used to value, have been long unasked; till we have stood in some trial of life, and felt the want of our accustomed counsellor and friend, that we thoroughly comprehend the world of separation, and



bereavement, contained in that short phrase, "He is dead."

David Stuart withdrew his eyes from the paper, and leaving his untasted and solitary meal, he walked to the window. Little Eleanor was in the garden, wandering sadly to and fro; she paused as she perceived her new acquaintance, and smiled mournfully. David called to her.

"How is your Mamma, Eleanor? is she better?"

"It is not my time yet to see Mamma," said the child; "but they tell me she is very ill because of that bad news, and that she will not come out of her dark dressing-room all day."

"Well, but you will see her in her room presently, and I want you to carry a letter to her; wait for me."

Taking a packet from the table, he passed from the open window into the garden and joined Eleanor: he led her by the hand in silence for a few steps, and sat down with her on a rustic bench.

"Eleanor," said he, "your father told me you understood very easily what was said to you. This is his dying letter; the last he ever wrote; and he was so weak that it took him three days to finish it; and this other paper holds some of his hair. I wish you to take these to your Mamma. I do not like to send them by one of the servants; and I am a stranger, and perhaps your Mamma may not wish to see me



for some days, and yet there is something I must know before I to go town. Take them to her, and say that David Stuart sent you, and earnestly desires to know what he can do to serve and assist her in this bitter time of affliction. And try to comfort her, for remember she has nothing in the world now but you."

"And Godfrey, my brother — she has Godfrey! I cannot comfort Mamma as he could, — oh, no;" and she shook her head, as her eyes filled with tears.

David Stuart looked at her with strange interest.

"Well," said he, gently, "you can only do your best. Come to me in the library when you have given the letter, and tell me the answer."

The little girl took the papers, and with a grave and earnest glance towards the still closed shutters of her mother's room, she turned her steps towards the house. It was true, as her father had said, that her understanding was beyond her years; and she executed her message with a tact and fidelity which might have surprised those who have never witnessed the precocity both of feeling and comprehension, which children who are brought up alone, that is without companions of their own age, frequently display. She repeated, nearly in his own words, the short explanation he had given; put the packet into her mother's hand, opened a part of the shutter to allow the light to fall on the letter, and sat down on the low stool by her couch to await her reply.



Lady Raymond broke the seal, and through the bitter blinding tears which gushed from her eyes, she read the last farewell of him who had been to her, husband, father, protector, and friend. The letter ran as follows:

“My beloved Clara,

“It is now two days since Dr. Randolph informed me that I had better prepare for the worst; and if I had any arrangements to make for you and my child, or any message to leave, that I should lose no time in committing them to paper. I am so weak to-day, that I begin to believe him; and I write to you, though I can hardly think it possible that I am indeed to die without embracing you! To die within so few days sail of England! perhaps in sight of shore! This is a very bitter trial; but it is God’s will, and we may not murmur. My health had been declining very rapidly for some months before I left India; but knowing how delicate and easily alarmed you are, I forbore all mention of this in my letters, wishing that you should only hear of my illness, when you could nurse me through my expected recovery. I feel this concealment, alas! will only make the blow of my death fall heavier upon you; but you will forgive me, knowing that I meant all for the best, and that it was to spare you pain and anxiety that all was done. The news will be broken to you by one to whose tender-



ness I owe much; the son of my old friend Stuart of Dunleath. I have already spoken of him so often in my letters home, that I hope he will scarcely seem a stranger. Your gentle nature will feel an interest in him, as the son of the woman who was the object of my boyish adoration; that most beautiful, most noble-hearted creature, whose vain efforts to stave off the ruin brought on by poor Stuart's reckless extravagance and vanity; whose steady self-denial, calm courage, and devotion to her children, first taught me to value the worth of women, as it is the misfortune of some men, from less holy associations, to be unable to value them. Her death, and the forced sale of Dunleath, quite broke down what little nerve hard drinking and wearing anxieties had left to Stuart, and I believe he was in a sad state before he died. I think there is much of his mother in David. Personally he is her living image. When I proposed to him, in the wreck and ruin which surrounded him, to be my secretary, I half expected the Highland Laird's blood to revolt, as his father's did, at even a rational scheme of independence. But I was mistaken. He has inherited his mother's patient energy, untiring sweetness of temper, and sane, honest views of life. During the four years he has been with me (your absence leaving me only the shadow of a home) I have become attached to him as to a son, and he has shown me the devotion that might bless a father. I



think, young as he is for such duties, I cannot leave the care of your destiny and that of little Eleanor in better hands. Her fortune will be large, for old Raymond of Raymondville, my Calcutta grand-uncle, whose property I have just inherited, wills that it shall descend to her. He left a large sum of ready money besides, which I was to employ in the purchase of land, or in any way I pleased.

“My dear Clara, I have left fourteen thousand pounds of this money to your son by your first marriage, Godfrey Marsden. I have left ten thousand to David Stuart. Eleanor will inherit from the Calcutta fortune certainly not less than five thousand a-year, and your income will exceed three thousand. I leave you, therefore, without suffering those worldly anxieties which often cumber and distress the souls of departing men. You will have to suffer none of the privations and struggles of your first widowhood, my poor, gentle, delicate Clara! I am thankful also to be able to serve your son: the young Lieutenant may now, I think, marry Emma Fordyce, without the charge of imprudence. He stands high on the list for promotion. If his manhood fulfil the promise of the boy, you will have great cause to be proud of him: greater courage, and a sterner and more exact sense of duty I never saw in a young lad: God bless him for your sake. And now God bless you, my Clara, for we are come to our last farewell! God bless and take charge of



you and my orphan child. God keep and sustain you through the first trial of bereavement, and the lone years to come. Strive to bow to His will, and put your trust in His mercy, as I do, even in this hour of unutterable dejection. There is a life beyond the grave, and we shall meet in a better world. In all temporal difficulties, great or small, David Stuart will take my place as your adviser and protector; cherish him as you would cherish a brother; teach my child to respect and look up to him; and never forget that to his ear was whispered the blessing I pined to bestow on my distant wife and little one; that his hand was the last that pressed the hand of the exile whom it was God's will should die, in sight of shore! His love and care have soothed the bitterness of the death-hour, as his fidelity and energy eased the last struggling years of my service in India. I do not know what more a son could have done for me than he has done; and as a son, rather than a friend, I bequeath you to him: a sacred trust, which he will sacredly fulfil. God bless you, now and ever, and God's will be done.

“Your affectionate husband,

“JOHN RAYMOND.”

A memorandum of the last moments of the good, generous hearted protector she had lost, was appended to the letter. After writing it he had sunk rapidly, and many hours of the two lingering days which fol-



lowed, passed in apparent unconsciousness. On the third morning at sunrise he rallied a little, and begged to be carried on deck; some demur was made, on account of his state of excessive weakness. He smiled sadly at the surgeon, and said:

“This will be, as you well know, my last request.”

He was carried up in his hammock as he lay. The bright, glorious sunshine of morning dazzled his weak eyes, and he closed them for some minutes. Then, feebly pressing David Stuart’s hand, he pointed tremblingly to the white line of cliff already visible far over the sea.

“England!” said he, “Home!”

The plaintive tone entered Stuart’s heart like a sword. For a long time no other word was spoken. Then, some murmured observation on the delicious freshness of the morning breeze, hovered on the lips of the dying man: then an hour of silence. The surge of the water as the ship cut her way through, and the flapping of some half-filled sail, as the wind gradually fell to a calm, were the only sounds. The broad sun brightened over the ocean; the day wore on. Sir John Raymond sighed restlessly, then with sudden energy he said:

“Guard them truly, they are so helpless: my Clara — my poor little Eleanor — guard my Eleanor!”

It was the last quiver of the expiring lamp, and the lamp went out.



Eleanor returned to David Stuart with her mother's vague broken-hearted answers. She did not know, she did not care, what was to be done. She left everything to Mr. Stuart. She did not want to see him. She would rather not see him; there was nothing more to ask, or to know, or to care about, in this world. The funeral and the settlement of affairs were for him to arrange. She did not wish to read law-papers; she would not understand them if she did. She understood her beloved husband's letter; it told her all she wanted to know. She hoped, if Mr. Stuart was going away, he would come back and stay at Aspendale till she was better. She could not attend to anything; her son Godfrey was at sea; and she was afraid of dying, and leaving Eleanor alone in the house. Sir John had explained that Mr. Stuart was to act in his stead, and she hoped he would forgive her if she begged him not to leave her in this awful hour, more than was necessary. She had rather not have little Eleanor with her much. She would rather be alone. She would be very thankful if Mr. Stuart would write to her son Godfrey, to tell him the dreadful news, and ask when his ship could return home. She was too ill to think about anything more. She begged Eleanor to leave her.

"Helpless, indeed!" thought David Stuart; as the child, not without tears, innocently repeated her mother's broken sentences. Then, wiping her eyes, she said



"But I will be no trouble to you; indeed, if, as mamma thinks, you are going to be very busy, I think I could take some trouble for you. I could certainly write that letter to Godfrey; Mr. Fordyce says I write very well; or I could copy any letters for you; I copied once a whole sermon for Mr. Fordyce, and he gave me a Bible with silver clasps. He is my only friend. I am very dull when I cannot go to him. Will you let me do something for you? I would be glad to do anything for you, papa's friend."

The child timidly and yet tenderly laid her hand on his, and looked up in his face. David Stuart knew nothing of children. Pity, wonder, and a sort of embarrassment at the strangeness of his own position, kept him silent. He took her hand, and looked at it as if it had been a little white shell gathered on a strange shore; musing. The echo of her tender tone, calling him "Papa's friend," as if it were a name, lingered in his ear: the tears gathered in his eyes.

"Oh! Eleanor," said he, "I loved your father, and he loved me; but I shall never be able to protect you as he would have done."

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## CHAPTER V.

David Stuart's Ward.

THE only other person named by Sir John Raymond as trustee, a distant relation of his own, had died in a fit of apoplexy, some time before the arrival of the Albion. David Stuart found himself therefore sole executor and guardian to Eleanor. Never was man more puzzled or more interested than he, with the charge of the little daughter of his benefactor. He marvelled at her intelligence; grown persons are apt to put a lower estimate than is just on the understandings of children. They rate them by what they know, and children know very little. But their capacity of comprehension is great. Hence the continual wonder of those who are unaccustomed to them, at the "old fashioned ways" of some lone little one who has no playfellows — and at the odd mixture of folly and wisdom in its sayings. A continual battle goes on in a child's mind, between what it knows and what it comprehends. Its answers are foolish from partial ignorance, and wise from extreme quickness of apprehension. The great art of education is so to train this last faculty as neither to depress nor over-exert it. The matured mediocrity of many an infant prodigy, proves both the degree of expansion to which it is possible to force a child's intellect, and the boundary which nature has set to the success of such false culture.



Eleanor Raymond might with little trouble have been trained into one of these diseased specimens of perfection. She was living in that melancholy exile, a child cleverer than the grown people round her; and the efforts made by her mind, were like the efforts made by a plant to shoot upwards towards the air and light. Her "only friend," as she expressed it, was old Mr. Fordyce, the clergyman of Aspendale, whose daughter was betrothed to her brother Godfrey. His heart had yearned towards the little neglected child, left so much by her invalided mother, to the care of her Hindoo Ayah and the servants of the household. As the half sister of the man to whom he was to entrust his own child's future, Mr. Fordyce thought it his "bounden duty" to do what he could for Eleanor. Good old Mr. Fordyce! he thought it was his duty to give up his whole life to the service of his fellow creatures, and the little time he was able to spare from his avocations as parish priest, had for the last three years been devoted to Eleanor. Ever since one day, when passing through the garden, he found the child sitting staring listlessly at some sunflowers, with so sad an expression in her eyes, that he enquired what was the matter. Nothing was the matter, but she had no book to read, no one to talk with, nothing to do, and her mother was too languid to have her constantly in the room with her.

David Stuart followed Mr. Fordyce's footsteps. In



that very garden, shaded from the sunshine by an old yew, at the end of one of the broad gravelled walks, little Eleanor read to her guardian the sermon she had copied. No monk who ever executed an illuminated manuscript, in times when such works were a marvel of beauty and tedious care, could feel more pride in the completion of his task than she did. No lover ever listened at twilight to the voice of his ladye fair, with more rapt and tender attention than David Stuart to the voice of the child.

"The text is, 'unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.' You must remember the text," said she.

David Stuart did remember it. Years afterwards, when many other memories were swept from his mind like the traces on sand beneath the waves, he yet remembered that text and the reading of old Mr. Fordyce's sermon!

With Mr. Fordyce himself, he formed a close friendship. It was a great pleasure, a mutual pleasure, this meeting of two cultivated minds, in the retirement of Aspendale; and the old man was never so cheerful as when Mr. Stuart came to the Rectory, and sat with him in the little parlour he had fitted up as a library.

David belonged, too, to a family well known to Mr. Fordyce in early life. He was a Scotchman, and there is a brotherhood among Scotchmen, which the English, (as far as I have seen in the various corners of the world) carefully avoid imitating.



The old clergyman thought David Stuart so charming, that he wished he had a son like him; and in the recesses of his simple heart, he questioned whether it was prudent to allow his little common place daughter Emma, to compare him so constantly with her recollections of Godfrey Marsden. It was a needless fear. The little common place daughter never gave David Stuart a thought, further than being glad her father had found a pleasant companion; but her thoughts wandered very often from all objects round her, to the visionary image of a ship sailing homewards, indifferently manned by the one sole image of its first lieutenant.

The orphan child of Sir John Raymond, was a frequent subject of discussion between her new friend and her old one. She throve under their mutual tutelage, and from being a very grave, reserved child, became very gay and playful. She was no longer in a sort of prison, body and soul; she had escaped from the palisades of mediocrity which surrounded her mind, just as she had gained the privilege of walking past the park and garden, down to the wild broken scenery of a spot called the roaring Linn; a spot greatly admired by tourists; where a waterfall of great height, flinging itself for ever into the great, black, shining pool below, filled her young imagination with pleasurable awe.



For some time it had been a question whether she ought not to have had a governess; but months crept on: Lady Raymond seemed to droop more and more under the burden of her great sorrow; David Stuart remained, by her earnest request, domiciled at Aspendale; and no new arrangements were entered into. Till Lady Raymond's health amended, till he left Aspendale he would educate the child of his benefactor himself. He had no profession, no employment, nothing to call him from this duty. Since the ruin of his father, the death of his mother, and the sale of Dunleath, he had had no occupation but that of being Sir John Raymond's secretary. His only occupation now, was that of Eleanor's guardian. Dear little child, why not be her tutor and guardian in one? Why avail himself so formally of his right, as to make her over immediately to a stranger? It would be time enough to think about governesses when he left Aspendale.

It was settled then, that Eleanor and David Stuart should be constant companions. His meals were no longer solitary. Her light feet tripped along the path, in his after-dinner saunter in the beautiful garden. Her eyes looked gladly across the breakfast-table, proud of being allowed to make tea for him. Her small, glossy head might be seen bending over its book in a corner of the library, whenever he looked up from his own studies. Dearly he loved the child; dearly he loved those eyes that were so like her father's, but



without the shadows of care and anxiety, which had darkened his well-remembered glance.

A child's eyes! those clear wells of undefiled thought, what on earth can be more beautiful? Full of hope, love, and curiosity, they meet your own. In prayer, how earnest; in joy, how sparkling; in sympathy, how tender: the man who never tried the companionship of a little child, has carelessly passed by one of the great pleasures of life, as one passes a rare flower, without plucking it or knowing its value. A child cannot understand you, you think. Speak to it of the holy things of your religion, of your grief for the loss of a friend, of your love for some one you fear will not love in return: — it will take, it is true, no measure or soundings of your thought; it will not judge how much you should believe; whether your grief is rational in proportion to your loss; whether you are worthy or fit to attract the love which you seek; but its whole soul will incline to yours, and engraft itself, as it were, on the feeling which is your feeling for the hour. David Stuart had not been three months in the house, before little Eleanor comprehended, that the most loving memory of his heart was the memory of his mother — the great grief of his heart, the loss of Dunleath. She thought much and tenderly of people and places she had never seen. She loved to read descriptions of Highland scenery. Every nook in Walter Scott's novels was a shadow



of Dunleath. She loved to listen to her guardian's account of boyish days, when his mother taught him; the lesson-books lying on a beautiful sculptured, sun-dial, which had once been a Greek altar, and which his father had imported at great expense, with many copies of celebrated statues, from Italy. She loved to hear him describe Dunleath, as it was then; so cared for, so adorned; and she loved to hear him describe it as it was the last melancholy day he saw it, after it had been vainly advertised for sale, by the writer who had bought it; after Stuart had been long away, and only returned to look at it before he sailed for India. How, then, all was forlorn, neglected, and deserted; how the heavy untrained roses lay tangled across the damp green paths, and the passion-flowers hung broken from the walls; how the statues stood gleaming under the firs, like ghosts of past prosperity; how the weeds and nettles had so sprung up by the sun-dial and his mother's favourite seat, that he stopped to root them up, and kissed the dial where she had so often leaned her beautiful head on her hand, watching the children at play. He spoke of his brothers, and a sister, all now dead. He repeated to Eleanor that touching and perfect poem of Mrs. Hemans, "The Graves of a Household," and explained how it was, that although

"They grew together side by side,  
And filled one home with glee,  
Their graves were severed far and wide,  
By mount, and stream, and sea."



He felt no embarrassment at describing these things to the little child, as he would have felt with one of his own age; nor was he ashamed to shed tears before her. Perhaps, some of the most soothing moments he had experienced for years, were spent in this outpouring of the heart to one who comprehended nothing but his grief. She knew not his broken-hearted mother's trials, his selfish father's extravagance. She only knew that Dunleath was lovely; that it had passed away into the hands of the stranger; that her guardian had no mother, sister, or parents now. And oh! what a world of compassion swelled up from the pure fountain of the child's heart as she listened to the sorrows of the grown man!

Day by day this strange tranquil life glided on. Lady Raymond lived sorrowful and secluded. David Stuart visited Mr. Fordyce, and taught and trained his dead benefactor's child. Some curiosity was excited in the neighbourhood about Sir John Raymond's secretary, but it soon died away. He neither seemed to seek nor to shun acquaintances—but it was evident he had no interest in anything out of Aspendale. He studied much, he sketched; he played the piano; an accomplishment common among foreigners, though rare among our own countrymen, which he had acquired from his mother in his desultory education at Dunleath. He went out to the Rectory, and was welcomed by the pious old man; he came home to Aspendale, and



was welcomed by the fond little girl. It was an innocent, a happy time; happier than any he had ever known since Dunleath was sold to strangers, and his mother laid in her grave — happier, perhaps, than he ever knew again in all the years of a prolonged life.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Education.

It was winter: the crisp snow lay on the broad gravel walks in the garden, and icicles hung on the cold black bushes that grew by the roaring Linn, when little Eleanor, with a flushed cheek and an anxious countenance, entered the library where her guardian was reading.

“Guardie,” said she abruptly, “news is come from Godfrey; his ship is on its way home; he will be here soon; mamma is very glad. Oh! I ought not to think of myself at such a time, but I am never much to mamma, and now you will see I shall be *nothing*.”

She pressed her slender hands on her eyes, and sobbed aloud. David Stuart was surprised and disturbed.

“Are you jealous of your brother? you, my little good Eleanor. I could not have believed it.”

“No, no, I am not jealous; I am sure I am not. It is he — that is, I cannot explain — but he always corrects me, and thinks me foolish, and points out to



mamma what he thinks are my faults; and mamma is so fond of him, oh! so fond; you cannot think how fond she is of Godfrey: wait till you see."

Lieutenant Marsden arrived, and David Stuart *did* see how fond the poor feeble widow was of her son. There is, among some statistical records of madness lately published, an account of a woman who went mad from pride in her child, and imagined herself the mother of one of the Seraphim. Lady Raymond just stopped short of the point of insanity. She did not imagine herself the mother of a seraph, but she certainly thought human perfection had reached its *acme*, in the good-looking, stern, square-shouldered young officer she had the happiness to call her son. What he said was law; his very step had a quarter-deck brevity and decision about it, as if he were for ever about to issue a command. He treated his mother with a protecting and superior tenderness, which he reversed into a stern criticism for every other human being not excepting his affianced bride. He treated Eleanor as his father had treated his mother during their brief, unhappy union; in days he could not remember, but of which he gave in his own manner so exact a copy, as sometimes surprises those who think habits are not hereditary, and who will not admit that habits are in fact a part of our nature and disposition: the outward covering of the soul.

Lady Raymond again, gave an example of a yet



more marvellous and equally common working of the human heart. She idolised the son who was the exact counterpart of the husband who had seemed odious to her. She never perceived or admitted, that there was tyranny or injustice in that method of treating Eleanor, which she herself had once found it so difficult to endure. She was proud of her son; proud of his unflinching endurance of hardship, and courage in danger; proud of his seamanship and acknowledged ability in his profession; proud of his stern uncompromising rectitude; proud even of his looks, and his personal strength; proud of his familiar acquaintance with every line of Holy Writ; proud of the pharisaical excellence of his conduct and character.

And in all these various causes of pride, Godfrey Marsden concurred. He was clothed (under his lieutenant's uniform) in a perfect panoply of self-satisfaction. If he set himself up as a judge of all other men, it was that he was better than all other men, and he knew it. To say that his little common-place Emma concurred also in these views, would be to express but feebly the entire and undoubted conviction in her mind that he was a faultless model of what man should be. Most unnecessary would it have been to preach to her, the text, "Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands." She had been a dutiful submissive child, to her fond benevolent father, and she was prepared to be a submissive wife to her lover. In her heart, so far from



regretting the indulgence of her first home, or looking with awe to the second, she thought there was something grand in Godfrey's sternness. Feeble natures respect even exaggerated energies; the contrast strikes them as a superiority.

David Stuart found himself almost immediately in collision, as it were, with the son of Sir John Raymond's widow. Perfect tact, natural sweetness of temper, and a strong anxiety not to afford or grieve, the poor sorrowful faded being whose face had, since the return of the young sailor, begun to wear unwonted smiles; in vain contended in his heart with the position into which he was suddenly thrown. Godfrey, who appeared somewhat surprised at finding him a resident at Aspendale, cross-questioned him about Sir John Raymond's affairs, as though he were appointed merely to transact business, and arrange for Lady Raymond. He prefaced his questions always by saying:

"It is necessary, in order that I may know exactly how to advise my mother as to her future plans, that I should be made aware, &c."

He interfered in every step that had been taken, or was proposed to be taken, for little Eleanor. He ridiculed the notion of a man educating a girl, and named a lady (sister to the first mate on board his own ship) as an eligible governess. He found fault; he argued; he catechised. He scolded the little girl incessantly; sometimes for being too shy, sometimes



for being too bold, sometimes for being indolent, sometimes for romping; twice, till she wept, for not knowing the sense of some erudite Scriptural quotation: once, for the involuntary error of being too tall for her age. David Stuart thought Lady Raymond's son perfectly insufferable. Lady Raymond began to fear her little daughter would require a very strict governess indeed.

Fortunately the preparations for his marriage stopped these experimental cruises of Godfrey's, by directing his thoughts to one desired haven. The liberal bequest of Sir John Raymond had enabled him to fulfil his engagement with Emma Fordyce sooner than he hoped, and the young stern sailor was very happy. So was Lady Raymond. So was Emma.

Somehow little Eleanor caught a cold and fever about this time. David Stuart thought the church had been too chill for her, the day of the wedding. Godfrey Marsden held, that she had sickened the day after she visited some poor cottages in the neighbourhood. He objected to these visitings. It encouraged the poor to depend on uncertain resources, on the aid of their richer neighbours.

"I am of opinion that their richer neighbours ought to help them, and that the reliance you speak of is a bond of union between the upper and lower classes," said David.



"You destroy all industry and independence, that's all I mean to say."

"My dear Mr. Marsden, there is much talk of the self-dependence of the poor, I wish we could point to the self-dependence of the rich, as an example for them to imitate; and not reserve even begging, on a large scale, as an indulgence sacred to the gentry. Which of us can say they never at any time asked aid? Not perhaps in money, but a word from a great man; or —"

"I can;" interrupted Godfrey; "and I tell you, you will pauperise the whole village, besides teaching my sister false notions of duties to the poor. What has she to do with the poor of Aspendale?"

David Stuart smiled and sighed. He was thinking of the assistance to Godfrey's whole destiny and fortune, which Sir John Raymond had given. He answered quietly, however:

"I teach your sister those duties as I understand them, and as Mr. Fordyce understands them; I teach her to do as much rational good as she can, in the circle round her. It is little any individual can do, but if all did their best, we should have a starlight night of it, instead of groping our way in darkness. Eleanor is at present resident at Aspendale, and wherever she happens to be resident, there the poor have a claim upon her."

"Mr. Fordyce is the clergyman of the parish, and



it is his business to visit the sick and the poor; it is not Eleanor's business."

"And you think personal communion with the poor should be confined to the clergyman of the parish? Pshaw!" said David Stuart, impatiently, as he turned over the leaves of his book.

"I think," answered Godfrey, doggedly, "that Eleanor has caught the scarlet fever in those cottages, and so you will find."

Some fever Eleanor certainly had, though the doctor said it was nervous, not infectious; and David Stuart was very near adding to his growing experiences of a child's perfections, the experience (never to be forgotten by those who have witnessed it) of the beauty, the touching beauty, of a child's death-bed scenes — its undoubting piety — its patience under pain — its tender farewells to all friends on earth — its loving trust to meet all in heaven — its meek apologies for trouble given — its simple, fervent, eloquent prayers. Ah! who that has once seen these things can forget them, or fail to remember also the text which affirms of children that their angels do always behold the face of the Almighty in glory?

It pleased God, in this instance, to spare the life of the child; perhaps for the after-trial of the man. While it lay ill, David Stuart watched and prayed all day and all night. For ten nights of suffering and delirium, followed by utter prostration of strength, he



never left his little charge. He wrote words of comfort and encouragement to her terrified and drooping mother, which were fumigated and forwarded from one room to another by Godfrey; who, in spite of the doctor's opinion, persisted that there was a risk of infection, which he would not permit Lady Raymond to run; useless as she must be in the sick room, from her own feeble condition of health. Meanwhile Eleanor's guardian scarcely touched food: and he was himself amazed at the anguish with which he thought of the possible death of this fragile, tender-hearted child. She did not die: she recovered: she said to him:

"I shall never hear the sound of a person writing; the sound of the pen passing over the paper, without pleasure. When I was too weak to speak, or even to open my eyes, I heard you writing; I knew there was some one in the room who loved me, and was taking care of me. Dear Guardie, when my head was confused, I thought you were my good angel, and were writing in a book all I had done to offend God, and that then you prayed it might not be reckoned against me. That was a dream; but you did pray for me, very often; I saw you kneeling and praying for me. Oh! I am so glad to be spared! Pray for me now, that I may make good use of life."

With tearful eyes, and the small white hand folded in his own, David knelt and prayed; and the pale child whispered "Amen."



That day he dined down stairs with the rest of the family. As he took his place at table, looking weary, and haggard, and happy; his long watching and its successful result equally legible in his countenance; Godfrey said:

“Well, Mr. Stuart, I hope this will be a warning to you, and that you will not again take Eleanor to those sort of places; you were near costing my mother a great sorrow.”

David Stuart was mortal; not an angel, as in Eleanor’s dream; and he felt irritated at this speech. He was exceedingly weary, and nothing makes men so peevish as fatigue. He did not believe Eleanor caught the fever in the cottages; and he *did* secretly believe that no one would have lamented her as much as himself. He answered shortly, that he had already explained himself on this matter, and that what had occurred had in no way altered his opinion.

“Then give me leave to say, that my mother ought to control Eleanor. It is absurd to bring her up in this way — quite absurd!”

“Mr. Marsden,” said David Stuart, “I shall teach Eleanor what I think it best for her to learn. One thing I certainly never will teach her; that she is to sit, as we sit here to-day, warm, covered, eating a good dinner by the light of wax-tapers, while within a stone’s throw of the Park gate, some poor hungry sickly wretch is lying, whose suffering she is not to



meddle with, because the principles of political economy preach the independence of the poor."

"You teach her absurd crotchets! She never can alter the state of things. The poor are never to cease out of the land. If I had the guiding of Eleanor —"

David Stuart was fallible; and his fallibility became suddenly apparent.

"Boy," said he passionately, to the amazed Lieutenant, "I have borne much from you; and I would thank you to remember, now and henceforward, that Sir John Raymond left me guardian to his daughter, not *you*. You forget yourself."

The pride, the passion, the sudden flash of the haughty eye, struck upon all like an electric shock. Lady Raymond burst into tears. Emma stared, with her gentle, foolish eyes, till she looked quite stupefied.

"Forgive me," said David Stuart, "I am grieved, most grieved to have agitated Lady Raymond," and he left the room.

"Ah!" thought he, as he slowly ascended the staircase, and opened the door of Eleanor's chamber, "is it possible that I, who an hour ago prayed with this poor child, should quarrel about her? Is it possible that, after supplicating for strength against the temptations of a whole life, I cannot command even the slight momentary temptation of anger against one of



her relations! What would my poor mother have thought of this scene?"

There was much of his mother's nature in David, but the alloy of his father's blood was there also. The nerve and untiring energy which enabled Mrs. Stuart of Dunleath for years to stem a flood of ruin, he had; but not her patient self-denial, her unswerving purpose. Her enthusiasm, her tenderness, her wide sympathy and indulgence for all her fellow-creatures, he had; but not her self-government. The pang of remorse ever followed in his heart the commission of error, but the new error was not certainly avoided. He was like a fair ship, well trimmed, with all her sails, masts, and cordage complete; her rudder and compass to steer, but no anchor to hold by when all was done.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Contending Interests.

AND so it was, that a mutual dislike sprang up between Godfrey Marsden and David Stuart. The latter contrasted the ungracious manner and airs of authority of the young sailor, with the tenderness, confidence, and often-repeated expressions of gratitude of Sir John Raymond; and the interference of Captain Marsden in his guardianship of Eleanor Raymond,



appeared the most unwarrantable assumption that ever was attempted. Godfrey, on the other hand, saw his mother a complete cypher in her own house, and the real master of Aspendale stand admitted in Sir John Raymond's secretary. Of Sir John he remembered little, and that little was untinged by any great sentiment of affection.

Lieutenant Marsden had chosen his profession, it is true, and he loved it; still, a boy who is sent to sea on the occasion of his mother's second marriage, will be very apt to connect the two events in his mind as dependent on each other. He had seen little or nothing of home since that date. He had roughed out those intervening years among rough men. He had, as sailors themselves graphically express it, been "knocking about at sea" ever since. His character, naturally hard and imperious, had followed its bent. Like the heel by which Thetis held Achilles, when she dipped that hero in the Styx, there was but one soft spot in Godfrey's heart, and that was love for his mother. Even his choice of a wife had been influenced by finding his common-place Emma an attentive and favourite visitor at Aspendale, where few visitors were welcome. He took the bequest of Sir John Raymond as something done to please his mother, whom too much could not be done to please. He felt no particular gratitude. He did not see that the occasion called for any. The affliction of the feeble widow



was grief to him; the death of his step-father was none.

Godfrey had a painful instinct that Lady Raymond had never loved his own father, as she had loved Sir John Raymond; and now there was no one she loved as fervently as Godfrey; for he was conscious that the affection bestowed on his little half-sister would bear no comparison with that she bestowed on himself. Lady Raymond was passively tender and gentle to Eleanor, because it was her nature to be passively tender and gentle to all things; but she loved her less than the memory of the little boy who was buried in an Indian grave; less, far less, than the stern son of the yet sterner husband of her youth. There are women who are incapable of loving their daughters as well as their sons, just as there are men who cannot love their sons as they do their daughters. Let metaphysicians account for it. The fact is so. Something there may be in that leaning to contrasts, so salient in the human heart. The feeble, fragile woman was proud of being Godfrey's mother: there was nothing to be proud of in being the mother of Eleanor. Whatever aversion might however exist between her son and the man to whom her late husband had confided their daughter, Lady Raymond was troubled with no further evidence of it. Godfrey comprehended (after much weeping, and the expression of hypochondriacal terrors on his mother's part, which sounded to the young



sailor very like the explanation of a child who is afraid to be left alone in the dark), that it suited Lady Raymond that Eleanor's guardian should remain at Aspendale; and, as she expressed it, "take all the dreadful responsibility off her hands." He, therefore, gloomily acquiesced in what appeared to him a most preposterous arrangement; and showed what disposition he could, to keep on friendly terms with Mr. Stuart.

He left to David (who was cast in a gentler mould, and whose heart smote him sorely for the tears he had wrung by a rash sentence from his benefactor's widow) the task of that daily and petty self-command, which is more irksome to our wayward nature than great occasional sacrifices. David watched himself; he endeavoured to like Godfrey; and Godfrey condescended to bear with him.

Lieutenant Marsden's stay on the present occasion did not greatly exceed a year; and, if truth must be told, he became a little restless and anxious to be afloat, even before he was appointed to another ship. Habit is second nature; and his second nature was to be tossed about by winds and waves, passing with more or less speed over the blank waste of the mighty ocean; or along dimly-seen coasts, whose pale lilac outline by day, and starlike light-houses by night, give such guidance to an otherwise trackless course, as was given of old by the pillar of cloud and fire in Scripture; and in a manner which seems almost as miraculous to the



uninitiated. He left to his common-place Emma, the holy and innocent occupation of a mother's care of their infant son; which she proceeded to fulfil, calmly kindly and faithfully, as she did all the other duties of her tranquil life.

She loved her stern husband, and wept at the thoughts of parting from him. When reproved however by Godfrey, for her tears, which he affirmed were not only childish, but an offence to God and to himself, she dried them; and only the baby, on whose face the drops fell, as she turned from the park gate, after seeing Godfrey start by the mail for Portsmouth, was conscious of her renewed temporary disobedience.

It was a relief to David Stuart when Godfrey Marsden went; and so it was to Eleanor; though her half-brother had tormented her less of late, partly mollified by her submission, and partly occupied with his wife's situation, and his own prospects of employment. Closer and closer the bond was knit, that bound the guardian and ward together. Hard study, and lighter accomplishments, walks, rides, and the cavilled at visitings in the cottages of the poor, filled up the happy days.

It was pleasant to Eleanor to sit and listen to David Stuart reading the Scriptures to the aged and dying; pleasant to hear his kind patient answers, his simple eloquent explanations, his method of informing and entertaining a class of sufferers, who, with few friends and no books, lie through the long days of



sickness, listlessly gazing at a blank cottage-wall. It was pleasant to her to ride over the craggy heath, and along shadowy summer lanes, mounted on the beautiful pony he had chosen for her. Pleasant to wander on the lovely evenings that closed a sultry day, down to the Roaring Linn, and sit there among the fern and moss-covered rocks. Pleasant to cultivate flowers raised from Indian seeds, and watch their strange tropic splendours come out along the greenhouse walls. Pleasant the music on winter evenings; the sketches made while favourite books were read aloud.

And all this went quietly on, till Eleanor was fifteen, and she had had no governess!

In his heart, David Stuart was not a little vain of the result of his apprenticeship in education. Eleanor was as sensible and well-informed as it was possible for a girl to be: a more charming companion no man could have desired to find in a wife: one more pure-hearted and amiable no man would have wished to call daughter. Lady Raymond was pleased and grateful; she had become gradually more cheerful; and the little family circle was as comfortable as a family circle could be.

It was about this time that the announcement of an obscure death, in the papers woke throbbing echoes in David Stuart's heart; and in Eleanor's for his sake. It was the death of Mr. Peter Christison, writer, of Edinburgh. He had been the last surviving trustee



in a Scotch trust, involving the principal portion of the property of the late Mr. Stuart of Dunleath. A Scotch trust is proverbially ruinous to those who are dependent upon it. Scotch writers and trustees occasionally make large and rapid fortunes. I should be loth to draw any inference which might, in this particular instance, seem to imply a connection between these two facts, but it is certain that while the fortunes entrusted to Mr. Christison's management gradually diminished, his own gradually increased. Indeed the augmentation on the one side bore so exact a proportion to the diminution on the other, that a simple person might be excused for imagining he perhaps enriched himself at the expense of those whose interests he was bound to protect.

The beautiful unhappy Mrs. Stuart of Dunleath once remarked to him, while wearying through accounts which her husband would never examine: "Mr. Christison, there must be either great carelessness or absolute cheating somewhere."

"Eh! Mistress Stuart! there may be carelessness, Ma'am; but ye 'll no suppose —"

"Carelessness is cheating on the part of a man of business," observed the lady; and the observation never was forgotten, or forgiven.

How the money went, no one exactly knew. Mr. Stuart kept open house, and did not keep any accounts. He was fond of travelling, fond of pictures,



statues, Scagliola marbles, everything of which the purchase is enormous, and the transport doubles the purchase money. And he bought, and transported to Dunleath, whatever he had a mind to. Never was Stuart of Dunleath known to deny himself a wish, or to reason upon its prudence. He planned beautiful new greenhouses when he could scarcely command money enough to pay his gardener's wages; and he placed antique statues, draped and undraped, at intervals along his lawn, long after he had ceased to meet his tailor's bills. Why he could not pay his gardener, or his tailor, was attempted to be shown (or concealed) in very lengthy and complex accounts; but to the last Mr. Stuart could never be brought to look these over.

"We're ruined, my dear, and that's enough," said he, moodily; "and we'll go and live at Palermo. Palermo's just a beautiful place."

I cannot expect my readers to have more patience about the exact position of Mr. Stuart's affairs than he had himself. But the brief result of the complex accounts was, that the owner sold Dunleath, and the writer bought it.

It is the brief result of many Scotch trust accounts.

Mr. Stuart died, and left nothing to his son. Mr. Peter Christison died, and left Dunleath to his widow; and now Mrs. Peter wanted to sell Dunleath, for she thought it would be less "lonesome" to live



in Edinburgh, than in that paradise of David Stuart's childhood. Fain, fain would David have gratified the widow, by taking it off her hands; but he had not a sixpence in the world beyond Sir John Raymond's bequest, and three times that amount would not have bought Dunleath.

"I declare," said he to Eleanor, "I could be satisfied to die the week after, only to tread the heather once more, calling the land my own. Home is home anywhere; but rely upon it, there is something in the freedom, wildness, and beauty of a mountainous country, which nurses the love of home into a passion. It is so with the Swiss: remember the fact told in the movements of the allied armies, that the mountain airs peculiar to Switzerland were forbidden to be played to the troops, on the plea that they woke so wild a regret in the men's hearts, that they caused fever, desertions, and deaths. So also, at one time, the playing of the air 'Farewell to Lochaber' was forbidden among the Highland regiments in America. I understand this. I cannot describe to you the sensations with which I have sometimes thought of Dunleath. In India especially, in that oppressive climate, under that sultry sun, I have sometimes thought of the lake, the fir trees, and the blue hills beyond, till my yearning amounted to madness!"

"But you may regain Dunleath," said Eleanor, gently. "Remember Lord Clive; remember how many



instances there are of that sort; we never know what the chances of life may bring."

And in her heart Eleanor wondered (since she certainly was an heiress) whether she could not buy Dunleath and bestow it on her guardian. She had a very vague notion of what the cost of such a magnificent gift would be, but she knew she had a very large fortune. With an innocent fear lest he should guess her thought, she forbore from asking either of the leading questions which might have resolved these doubts. Only she dreamed more than ever of the place she had never seen, and she copied every sketch and fragment David Stuart had preserved of the scenery there: the sun-dial that had been a Greek altar, with the blue lake and mountains beyond — clumps of old firs with bronzed stems and stern crooked branches cutting the clear sky — great grey stones and moss-covered rocks, round which the stream went gurgling and foaming down the glen — patches of glorious colour where the scarlet rowan and silver larch, and trees of all autumnal shades, bent over the white spray of the waterfall — still black tarns, that lay among the mountains without a shore, edged only by the soft peat, and heather with its scanty herbage, — wild glens, — long outlines of purple hills with clouds and mists lying over their summits and along their sides, — all these did Eleanor's skilful pencil reproduce. And the most successful of them she



framed and hung up; so that any one coming into Miss Raymond's dressing-room, would have imagined her whole life had been passed in the Highlands.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Eleanor's Guardian absents himself.

WHETHER it was from brooding over the chances consequent on Mr. Peter Christison's death, or other causes, David Stuart became sad and restless. He was absent on business much more frequently than formerly, and for much longer periods. At last one day he bid Eleanor good bye, with the unwelcome intimation that he should be away for a month.

"You are beginning to be a very truant guardian," said she, half sadly, half playfully; "I shall go back in all my schooling."

David looked at her, and sighed.

"It is to wean you, my little Eleanor; you know when you are one-and-twenty, or sooner, if you marry with my consent, my guardianship ceases. We cannot always be together; I wish we could."

These words made a terrible impression upon Eleanor. They pursued her with a melancholy echo:

"We cannot always be together."

She wept when her guardian was gone, and went to take a solitary musing walk down the lime avenue,



haunted by disturbed fancies half sweet, and half bitter. The days when she was a little child came back to her; she saw her former self wandering alone in the sunny garden, chasing the butterflies, and listening to the clear song of the birds above her head, yearning for some little companion to play with and talk to. Then the first pleasant walks with her guardian recurred to memory. The gentle kindness of his explanations; his smile of amused delight at her answers; his curiosity to know what she thought and understood. The expression of his countenance at other times, intently reading; undisturbed by, and unconscious of her approach, or noticing it as little as the fluttering of a bird's wing, or the dancing of a bough in the breeze. Then his image would suddenly present itself, waiting for her at the opening of the lime avenue; tired of studious contemplation; calling her to come back, and rove through the forest glade to the rocks by the Roaring Linn. His tall slight figure seemed to stand under the arch of those meeting branches, the half-closed book in his hands, his brows knit that his dazzled eyes might distinguish among the flowers and sunshine, the white frock and blue sash of his little ward. Then the pleasant wanderings in more recent days; the sound of the doves murmuring in the wood; the springing away of the startled deer in the open park in their long evening rides, when David Stuart would describe Dunleath, or speak



of his father, with a voice that sometimes faltered in its tone.

“Oh, how full of embarrassment had Eleanor felt at such times; riding silently on, in the deepening twilight by his side, and stealing shy glances at his severely beautiful profile, drawn as it seemed against the evening sky; till he would turn, and smile kindly at her, and talk of other things. Noble deeds and hair breadth escapes, foreign lands, wild superstitions, books of imagination and of real history: what was there they had not talked of, that was within her comprehension?

“Ah! happy life!” thought Eleanor Raymond, as she pursued her now lonely walk; and with the conviction of its happiness came a vague uncertain dread for the future. Her guardian was gone; he alluded to future absences; and not only to these, but he had spoken, as of a fixed and unalterable certainty, of the time when his presence at Aspendale would no longer be necessary.

The day was to come, then, when they were to part — they who had lived so long in close companionship! He was not a father, or a brother, whose society she was certain to enjoy at intervals as long as life endured; he was only her guardian; when she should attain the age of twenty-one (or sooner, if she married with his consent), her guardian’s power ceased. Eleanor inwardly vowed never to marry; and



she counted the years that intervened between fifteen and twenty-one. Six years; it was a long time to look forward to. But then, had she not already passed five in his society, and they seemed but as a day? Eleanor grew sad as she thought of the speed with which those other six years might pass; for then, what a blank — what a dreary void — what a life in vain — would life be without her guardian! She almost wished she might die before she was twenty-one, or just afterwards; on her one-and-twentieth birthday, perhaps, and how sorry David Stuart would be! The tears positively rushed into Eleanor's eyes, as she imaged the grief her guardian would experience at her death. And then she wondered whether, after she was laid in the grave, he would miss her much — whether he would miss her always, as she missed him; reading, walking, riding, and thinking.

And then came a doubt into Eleanor's mind, whether such a gentle and considerate sorrow as she trusted her kind guardian would feel for her, would not be comforted in time: and then another thought, — who would comfort him? and who would fill her place? And Eleanor felt less resigned to die, and more anxious than ever she had been before to know who were David Stuart's friends, and what his amusements and occupations when away from Aspendale.

These contemplations occupied Eleanor greatly. They were continual, but she did not find them mono-



tonous; they were foolish, but she was not conscious of their folly.

One morning, when instead of eating her breakfast, she was calculating the exact day of David's return, the old butler broke in upon her meditations, by presenting her with a letter. To Eleanor, who knew scarcely any one, and had never been from home, a letter was an event; and she took it with a slight blush of expectation and curiosity. It was from her guardian, the first she had received from him —

London, June 13th.

“My dear Eleanor,

“I find my absence will be prolonged beyond what I expected. I am going to Scotland — to Edinburgh — to transact some tedious business; it is therefore my wish that you should write to me from time to time, that I may know how you are going on. You can continue your German translations; I will look them over when we meet. You can also practise your drawing; taking more pains with the rules of perspective, and trusting less to the accuracy of your eye. Let Gibbon rest till I continue it with you; careless reading will not profit you; and I fear it requires all your awe of my authority to fix your attention on that great work. I will answer all your letters punctually, however busy I may be. Remember me to Lady Raymond, whose health is, I trust, as usual. God bless you.

“D. STUART.”



Analaschar, when he shivered his stock in trade, while dreaming of future prosperity, could not have felt a more sudden revulsion of bitterness than Eleanor Raymond, as she concluded this brief and unwelcome epistle. It had been received at a moment when her fancy and tenderness were wrought to the highest pitch. She felt jarred and offended. She had just been hoping for the day of his return, and he informed her of his indefinitely-prolonged absence, without one line of regret or one expression which might be construed into a wish that he were at Aspendale instead of Edinburgh! She felt as if some dear friend had suddenly refused her in the harshest terms a favour she had counted upon; and after struggling for a moment, she burst into tears.

Time, however, which has no respect either for joy or sorrow, but rolls on with silent and unfelt speed, slackened not his pace for David Stuart's absence. Eleanor found the usual hours easily occupied by her usual studies, and amusements; and the privilege of corresponding with her guardian, a novel and delightful pleasure. She treasured up his letters in a sandalwood box, and she read them over every day. They had become quite a little series before David returned; and in the interim Godfrey Marsden's arrival gladdened his mother and wife. Of his half-sister he took little notice, and he was of opinion that his baby should be corrected for crying when it was brought



to greet him, whether it recognised him or not. Eleanor was sitting with Emma, Godfrey, and her mother, at the open folding-doors of the terrace-window, when another arrival took place. She started up, and running down the steps, embraced her guardian with eager gladness. As he kissed her cheek, he said:

“Eleanor, I have brought you a Highland greyhound.”

Who is there, who has not, while listening to the most insignificant sentence, felt that suffering of which we know not the cause, emotion of which we cannot sound the depth, deserved or undeserved displeasure, or boundless and unconfessed affection, have so altered the speaker's voice, that we can neither forget nor overcome the impression? Such was the strange feeling with which Eleanor listened to the first words spoken by her guardian. The words were nothing; they were kind, they were simple; but the tone! What sorrow — what bitterness — was in the tone of his voice! It was only for a moment; as if conscious of it, he said, gently:

“The dog is a little large and rough for a lady's pet; but he is a good and noble creature, and will make an excellent companion in your walks and rides.”

“He shall be my guardian, always, when you are away; and defend and protect me from all dangers.”



As she spoke, she turned her face with a smile to the giver; he was pale; his eyes were fixed on her, but as if he did not hear or attend to what she was saying.

"You are ill! Surely you are ill, Guardy," said Eleanor timidly. David Stuart started, and sighed:

"I am only fatigued," said he; "I have been travelling these two nights past."

He turned from her, and entered the room where Lady Raymond and her son were sitting; she greeted him in her usual languid manner; Godfrey with tolerable cordiality; and he passed on towards the library. Eleanor followed him for a few steps, but he did not seem aware of her presence, and left her with her eyes rivetted on the door which he closed after him.

She returned, with a bewildered air, to the sitting-room. Godfrey was discussing something eagerly, almost angrily.

"Well, speak to her now," were the words Eleanor caught as she came forward.

"Eleanor dear, Godfrey thinks, and so do I, that you are rather childish for your age."

"Does he, dear Mamma?" said the gentle girl with a smile. "Tell me in what, and you shall see how womanly I shall grow?" and she seated her-



self by Lady Raymond, and kissed the hand that rested on the arm of her chair.

“My mother and I consider,” said Godfrey sternly, “that your manner is too childish with Mr. Stuart; flying down the steps in that heedless way to meet him; and kissing him. You are past fifteen, far too old for those romping and forward methods of displaying fondness: it really is most improper.” (here Lady Raymond looked uneasily from her son to her daughter.) “She ought to be told of it, mother,” said Godfrey doggedly. “You ought also to leave off that ridiculous habit of calling him “Guardy,” like a miss in an old comedy; and recollect that there is a difference of situation — of position — between Mr. Stuart and your father’s daughter.”

“You know, dear,” gently interposed her mother, “your birth and fortune will enable you to mingle in the best society. You will soon be old enough to be presented; and we wish you would reflect — that is, that you could understand — I am sure I would not say,” (Lady Raymond was getting very nervous,) “a word against Mr. Stuart; we all owe him much; I should be sorry you could feel otherwise than gratefully and kindly to him —”

“Of course, my dear mother, she knows that; but she ought to remember that Mr. Stuart was only Sir John Raymond’s secretary and man of business,” said Godfrey, with an imperious air.



Eleanor did not reply: from under the long dark lashes which quivered over her flushing cheek, she glanced towards the Indian cabinet where lay her father's last letter — that solemn and touching appeal which had been their only introduction to her guardian. Her guardian! of whom Godfrey spoke as if he were a hired clerk; and who, after all, was the son of Mr. Stuart of Dunleath. His ruin could not blot out hereditary descent. It was as good blood as any in Scotland. And his poverty! was Godfrey himself so wealthy, or so nobly born? He, who also inherited an independence from the generosity of her father! The first proud glance shot from Eleanor's eyes at her half-brother; then she repeated mentally those last affecting words, so often perused, so often blotted with her own and her poor mother's weeping:

“Teach my child to respect and look up to him! and never forget that to his ear was whispered the blessing I pined to bestow on my distant wife and little one; that his hand was the last that pressed the hand of the exile, whom it was God's will should die in sight of shore.”

Tears stole into Eleanor Raymond's eyes.

“Don't be vexed, darling,” said her mother.

“Don't be peevish, would be a better phrase I think,” said Godfrey scornfully. “If Eleanor can't bear a word of reproof from those who have the best right to offer it —”



"I will remember all you wish, Mamma: do not think I am peevish," said Eleanor. She bent and kissed her mother's cheek, and glided from the room.

Lady Raymond, after giving a glance of maternal satisfaction to her graceful figure, leaned back with half-closed eyes, quite fatigued with the unusual effort she had made.

"You see how gentle she is, poor child," said she to Godfrey after a pause. "She will certainly attend to what we have said. She is so docile and sweet tempered, and so ready to take any little hint."

"Well, I hope she may;" was Godfrey's reply, "her manners are as bad as possible. She is always on this low-cushioned stool, or sitting on the grass, or kneeling, while you are talking to her. All that is very bad, very undignified and unladylike. Yesterday she dropped her fork and leaned her cheek on her hand in the middle of dinner, with some wild exclamation about the sunset. I think she is growing very affected."

"I shall make *her* do the honours for the future, my dear Godfrey; and I will gradually begin to see a few of the country neighbours, if I can possibly rouse myself to call. That will improve Eleanor: it will form her; and all you object to, will alter of itself. I am so glad you are here to say what should be done."



## CHAPTER IX.

THE embarrassment which Godfrey's observations had created in Eleanor's mind, appeared to have communicated itself to her guardian. She was shy, and he seemed both shy and sad. The pains she had taken to improve the time of his absence by attention to her studies, seemed quite thrown away; he listened in a dejected indifferent manner to her Italian reading; he made no comment, he offered no corrections. If she came into the library, instead of finding him tranquilly engaged with some favourite author, perhaps smiling to himself over its pages; he met her with a start, walking restlessly up and down the room with folded arms, or she saw him leaning in the embrasure of the windows, looking out on the lawn, wistful and unoccupied. Was it possible that he was offended with her — angry at the change which she was conscious had stolen into her manner towards him? He could not know Godfrey's criticism. Could he think her so ungrateful as to be altered by his brief absence from home; or was he grieving for some cause unknown to Eleanor? Her thoughts reverted to Mr. Peter Christison's death, and Dunleath.

"Did you see any old friends at Edinburgh?" she asked.

"No, Eleanor, I have no old friends. You know, my life since boyhood has been spent abroad. Few



of my father's friends would recollect me, and people are not over eager in claiming acquaintance with the sons of ruined men. I saw one old friend in London, and I talked to her of you."

To *her*: a lady friend!

Eleanor was considering how to shape some question which might give her a notion what sort of friend; young or old, pretty or plain; when a deep sigh from her guardian startled her, and looking up in his face, the expression of pain and dejection written there forbade further comment. They took a cheerless silent walk to the old haunts, through the park gates, and the forest glade, down to the roaring Linn. The day was oppressively hot, and the cool mossy shade round the Linn, with all its fern-covered rocks, and tangled foliage, seemed to Eleanor delicious.

"How pleasant and peaceful everything is here," said she, looking upwards with serene eyes to the blue sky, seen through the lattice work of light branches over her head.

But David Stuart only muttered in reply the text, "And they cry peace, peace, when there is no peace."

There was a long pause. Eleanor was watching the dragon flies dart across the gleams of sunshine in the black pool below; her guardian also looked down into the pool, with dreaming eyes that saw nothing.

"When I have my own fortune," said she, "will it



be an income paid to me every year, or shall I be able to employ large sums in any way I please?"

The start, the look of wild astonishment, on the part of her guardian, did not discourage Eleanor, whose head was full of her project of buying Dunleath. She smiled as with a sort of playful obstinacy she repeated, "I say, may I do as I please with it?"

The amazement faded out of David Stuart's countenance: he forced a smile, and said:

"What do you want to do with it? build an Italian palace, or a Gothic church, on plans of your own drawing?"

A small thing will change conversation; this allusion to Eleanor's love of architectural drawing, and decorative art, a taste which her guardian fully shared, turned the current of moody thought into a new channel, she answered gaily:

"I believe I could persuade you to let me do that, without waiting till I am of age. We would spend it all in marble columns, and superb sculpture, and we would build a wonder of the world."

"For the present you must content yourself with building castles in the air, my dear Eleanor," said he, with a smile; and then, rallying out of his dejection, he pursued the favourite theme, and once more talked to Eleanor, as she loved to hear him. He described the Town-Hall at Bruges, and told her the story of Jacques Cœur, the Flemish jeweller, whose house it



was, and whose history is a pendant to our Wolsey's, in its illustration of the text, "Put not your trust in princes."

He described the curious church of San Miniato, at Florence, which Michael Angelo defended as a soldier, and where a thin slab of marble, at the eastern end of the church, admits a clouded glory of light at sunrise, remaining a blank wall during the rest of the day. He spoke of Italian and German churches, Indian temples, Turkish mosques, and Druid circles; of England and her ancient cathedrals; of the vulgar desecration of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey (where certainly the last thing any one is allowed to do, is "to meditate among the tombs"). Of the prejudice against pictorial decoration, and the outcry raised on that subject, though there is scarcely a whitewashed village church that has not a representation of the symbolical dove painted over its altar. Of the iconoclastic fancy, that it must be more acceptable to God to pray to him in a church, left blank as the manger where the Saviour was first cradled, than to worship in temples of architectural beauty: and to raise singing of such a sort in His service, that only a strong sense of the reverence due to holy places can prevent us from shutting out the discord, by stopping our ears. Then they spoke of the old Covenanters; of the Waldenses; of noble struggles, and many martyrdoms; and then of Melrose Abbey and Walter Scott; but as they talked of



Scotland, and the architectural relics there, David Stuart's sadness returned, and at length he relapsed into silence. Eleanor broke that silence by a desperate and straightforward question.

"What would Dunleath cost?" said she.

David Stuart turned and looked at her, repeating the words in a strange, irritable, gloomy tone.

"Mrs. Christison has changed her mind about Dunleath, I believe; it suits her daughter that they should remain there. It is not for sale." Then he added vehemently and passionately: "I do not know how it is, Eleanor, that you seem bent on torturing me to-day!"

The gentle girl looked up in his face, with unconstrained amazement. Her guardian had never been unjust to her before. Her mother was always tender; no one had ever been harsh to her but Godfrey. She felt wounded.

"My thoughts were very far from giving you offence," said she reproachfully.

David took her hand, and kissed it gently and sadly.

"I am ill, body and mind," said he. "I suffer; bear with me, even if I do not deserve it!"

Easy was it to Eleanor to bear with him. She would have endured any pain for his sake, if pain could be delegated; but it was not easy to her to free her mind from a certain depression and conscious



strangeness. She did not know which was most grievous to her, the voice in which he had accused her of "torturing" him, or the tone of miserable supplication in which he pleaded with her for patience. It was surely a reversal of their mutual position! He was her guardian, her protector, her father's friend, set in authority over her by that father. There was something shocking to Eleanor in his beseeching her to bear with him. But she answered him with the old innocent look of compassion he had so often seen in her eyes when a child, while listening to stories of his mother, and his lost brothers and sister. In those days the compassion of the little child had fallen upon him like balm, — but to-day it seemed to fester in his heart!

## CHAPTER X.

LADY RAYMOND did, as she had promised Godfrey, "rouse herself to call upon some of the country neighbours." Visits were paid, invitations were exchanged. People were very willing to come and see the pretty little heiress, and the widow who had lived as they said so long in grief and seclusion, watching over the education of her child. And then Godfrey discovered another fault in Eleanor; whom he pronounced to be extremely awkward. She was also painfully shy and silent with strangers, which he affirmed to be perfectly



ridiculous, as she could converse at home with extreme ease and fluency upon all subjects, and even showed a remarkable and superior intelligence.

It was the more irritating, as the little she did manage to say or do, was said and done with so constant a reference to her guardian, that Mr. Stuart on more than one occasion, without any assumption on his part, seemed to be doing the honours of Lady Raymond's house. The female part of the community also paid David a degree of attention extremely provoking to Godfrey. Those who had sons to marry, naturally thought it would be as well to be on good terms with the guardian whose consent would be required; and those who had not, finding themselves guests in a household composed of a languid invalided woman, a shy girl, a brusque sailor and his wife, and a very agreeable and handsome young man, quietly threw over the other elements of companionship presented to them, and addicted themselves to the last. While the company staid, they made much of David; when the company were gone, Eleanor chatted merrily with him, as if to make amends for the constraint she had endured. Godfrey made a new move.

"I presume," said he, one morning at breakfast, "that although Mr. Stuart has been Nell's tutor, he does not intend to be her chaperon. Your health, my dear mother, puts it out of the question that you should sag yourself at balls and parties, and my Emma



is not fit for that sort of thing. I have been thinking that Lady Margaret Fordyce, who is my wife's aunt by marriage, might undertake it."

"Lady Margaret has already undertaken it, subject to Lady Raymond's approval;" said David, with a slight tinge of mockery in his smile. "She is a very old friend of mine; I have known her since I was a boy. I saw her when I was in London, and we talked over this matter. For once, Mr. Marsden, you and I perfectly coincide in our views of what should be done. Lady Margaret is highly connected, valued and respected in society, and would probably find interest and amusement in the task."

Lady Margaret was accordingly invited to Aspendale. She wrote word that having been away many years in Italy, she had promised to make a whole tour of visits in Scotland that autumn and winter; but she would come for a month in the spring.

The autumn and winter wore away; no event of importance occurred. Lady Raymond caught an inflammatory cold driving home from a dinner given by one of the country neighbours, and David Stuart grew daily more moody, restless, and unhappy, as it seemed to Eleanor. They were, therefore, all more or less *triste* when the momentous day arrived which brought the proposed chaperon.

When Lady Margaret Fordyce was announced, and entered the drawing-room, leading her little daughter



by the hand, Eleanor could not restrain an exclamation of astonishment. If a rose had by some sudden transformation been turned into a lady, and its bud into her child, she could not have felt more amazed. "Good heavens, how beautiful!" she said, turning to her guardian; but he was looking with a glad smile at the new comers.

Lady Margaret came forward rapidly and gracefully. She greeted the Marsdens, was introduced to Lady Raymond, and then, letting go her child's hand and taking Eleanor's, she said smiling:

"And this is my eldest daughter, that is to be."

The lovely stranger was a woman of the world; she made no exclamation about Eleanor's beauty; but it was clear that she also was surprised and struck. Eleanor's heart beat quick; confused thoughts chased each other through her mind. It was strange in all their conversations, it had never occurred to David Stuart to tell her how very beautiful his old friend was; and somehow she had clothed the idea of a chaperon, in a more elderly form.

Her chaperon, and Godfrey Marsden's aunt by marriage! Was it possible she beheld the incarnation of these two thoughts?

Lady Margaret was a very great beauty. There could be no dispute about that. Her enemies — no, she had no enemies, but such critics as were not friends — said her figure was too full, and her eye-



brows and eyelashes not dark enough; but a certain air of candour intelligence and power, gave great dignity to her face, and she carried herself with grace and majesty. Her complexion was sunny and rich; her hands and arms those of a statue; and her faultless mouth so alive with expression, that you could have told her mood before speaking, as the deaf guess the words they do not hear. When she had interchanged greetings with all the assembled guests, she turned again to David Stuart.

"Here is a packet from your lawyer," said she. "He brought it to me before I left town. I have held it in my hand the whole way; for if there is anything inspires me with awe, it is a packet tied with pink tape from a lawyer's office. Now I will go and take off my bonnet, and become one of the family." She smiled at Eleanor as she said the last words, and they went together from the room.

Before they returned, David had read his lawyer's packet, long as it was; and Eleanor had ascertained, that Lady Margaret being sister to the Duke of Lanark, and Lanark's lodge the nearest place to Dunleath, she had known Miss Raymond's guardian in very early days; and Mr. Fordyce having been much in Italy, she had also met Mr. Stuart in later days.

"They were very good friends," Lady Margaret said; and Eleanor sighed. Either Lady Margaret's



arrival, or the lawyer's packet, must have gladdened David Stuart amazingly, for Eleanor had scarcely ever seen him in such spirits; she never remembered such a merry dinner as they had that evening; she never had seen any one so lovely or so entertaining as Lady Margaret. What a quantity of persons, things, and places, she and David seemed to have known and seen together, and how pleasantly she talked of all! What stores of information, what ready, graceful wit, what kindness and earnestness, came out like sunny sparkles on the stream of her discourse! Eleanor felt dazzled and bewildered; it was like a dream. But when, after dinner, David hoped she was not too tired with her journey to sing, and Lady Margaret sang; then Eleanor's admiration reached its height.

The gush of that sweet, clear, powerful voice, thrilled to her heart. Songs were sung, "old as the hills," but new to Eleanor. Scotch ballads, with their sudden octaves of distance and touching words; merry Neapolitan airs, mingled with recitative; melancholy and passionate German melodies of the divine Schubert; French romances; nothing seemed to come amiss to Lady Margaret. She wound up with a little plaintive Hindoo air, reminding David of the day he taught it to her, and how they both laughed at their own vexation at the quantity of tedious visitors who poured in that particular morning, as if purposely to prevent the completion of the lesson. Then she told David not



to be lazy, but to come and sing, himself; and they sang together.

Was Eleanor jealous of the accomplishments of her new friend? Surely not. All the ladies in Christendom might have sung like skylarks, and she would only have been glad of it for their sakes; and yet she felt pained. Here was a stranger come amongst them, who knew her guardian so very intimately — who remembered Dunleath and his mother — who could sing with him. Eleanor could not sing. Her guardian had taught her music, and she had learnt it well and quickly; but he was not a god — he could not give her a voice. What a loss it seemed, as she sat now and listened. Those blended tones; those long, soft, thrilling notes, that rose like angel messengers, floating away to an unknown world; that companionship of life and breath, vague and delicious, why had heaven denied it to her?

It was not till even Lady Margaret's beautiful voice gave evidence of fatigue, that David turned from the piano, and came back to his place. She followed him, and sat down by Eleanor.

"Now that I am fairly installed in office," said she, gaily, "I shall begin, like all new officials, to make great reforms — wonderful reforms; and, first of all, in Eleanor's dress."

"Is she ill-dressed? It seems to me a very pretty gown," said David, looking fondly at Eleanor.



"It is a colour for an old dowager, not a young girl; and only look at the sleeves!"

"Oh, I know nothing about sleeves," said he, laughing.

"But I do, and it shocks me to see such a sleeve. Discords in dress strike my eye, as discords in music strike your ear. I can't bear them: my spirits fail and I become quite irritable in the company of dowdies, while I am polite and charming in a well-dressed circle. People talk of vanity and frivolity; but, depend upon it, there is a harmony in dress, as there is in all other arts and sciences, and we ought to understand it. It does not take more time or more money to be prettily dressed, than to be dressed in unsuitable colours. Eleanor must not be a dowdy. I approve of a prospectus I read in some annual, for the establishment of a Beauti-cultural Society, where prizes are to be given to those who are the best-looking, and fines levied on those who choose to make unbecoming toilettes. It will be a most useful institution."

"Well, Eleanor shall be a member. I will cede my authority to you, so far."

"Then her dressing-room — I thought I was in some young bachelor's chambers in the Temple. No muslin, no screens, no nick-knacks of any kind; a regular library in miniature; book-cases down each side of the fire-place, with all sorts of learned books in them; a reading-table, a writing-table, and a paint-



ing-table: as to the dressing-table, I really expected to find upon it razors, and diamond-dust for sharpening them. I was comforted only by the extreme and feminine feebleness of the sketches of lovely Dunleath, which I suppose you have set her as copies. You must have a good master, dear Eleanor," said she, turning kindly to her: "you have great talent for drawing, though I discourage this guardian of yours, and want to set all the wheels going, on a new principle. By-the-bye, Mr. Stuart, I have brought down some H. B.'s! they are very good."

She rose and fetched the caricatures, and laid them one by one before him; standing by, and looking at them over his shoulder. Eleanor knew nothing of politics or political men. She had heard fragments of what appeared to her intolerably dull conversation between the neighbouring country-gentlemen, about Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel, and people who were "in," or "out," like boys at cricket, but she gave no heed to it. Now she was sorry she could not understand the jests which seemed to amuse her guardian. She sate, looking gravely, almost sadly, at these two friends, who were not thinking of her or of anything she could share in. A little circumstance startled her out of her reverie. Lady Margaret suddenly laughed, as she bent to look at one of the H. B. sketches. Mr. David Stuart, among other personal advantages, had beautiful hair; and his hair curled,



almost in ringlets, at each temple. When Lady Margaret laughed, her head was bent so low that her breath stirred the ringlet like a waft of the summer breeze. A hot, angry thrill went through Eleanor's heart. For days afterwards, with a vividness that astonished her, she was haunted by the image of those two heads bowed together over the caricatures, and the waving of that curl in the breath of Lady Margaret's joyous laugh. While the H. B.'s were being restored to their portfolio, David Stuart turned to Eleanor.

"You look pale and bored, my little girl," said he, "come and play a game of chess."

His manner was so gay, she could not resist remarking it to him.

"You are quite light-hearted again," said she.

"Yes, I have had such good news; when you know Lady Margaret better —" (and he looked back at her with a kind smile) "you will know that she carries sunshine with her wherever she comes."

The game of chess was played, but Eleanor was sadly inattentive. She glanced at Lady Margaret, who was teaching little Euphemia the crotchet-stich; and then, with her eyes fixed on the chess-board, she allowed her thoughts to roam vaguely through real and imaginary scenes, all more or less connected with the fact of the great intimacy that subsisted between her guardian and her chaperon that was to be. Oh! how



well she seemed to know his tastes, his habits of thought. How far, far beyond poor Eleanor's, was her power of entertaining him. How wonderfully beautiful she was! How glad he seemed since her arrival; he that had been so sad and absent in spirit for months. How kind, cordial, almost caressing was her manner to him! These, and such-like thoughts, turned round like a water-wheel in Eleanor's mind. Presently, little Euphemia came up to the chess-table.

"Good night, I am going to bed," said she. "Good night, Mr. Stuart," and she put her little face up to be kissed. "Good night, Miss Raymond."

Eleanor hesitated. Unaccountably the scene returned to her, when Godfrey had commented on her freedom of manner with her guardian; when he had advised her to be more dignified; when he had said that embracing Mr. Stuart was a forward method of displaying her affection. Some nervous oppression hung on her spirits. She gazed at Euphemia, and sighed. The shadow of David's kiss seemed to hover round the child's mouth, as the shadows of clouds fleet over the corn on a sunny day. The colour rose in her cheek.

"If you won't kiss me, I shall make you a curtsy," said the little girl, and ran merrily away.

"You were not much older than that, dear Eleanor, when first I came to Aspendale," said David Stuart; and in his tone, and in his eyes, there was such a



deep and cherishing tenderness, such gathering up of memories for long years, such blending of her helpless childhood, with present days, that Eleanor suddenly felt happier than she had believed it possible, during the last two hours, ever to feel again.

## CHAPTER XI.

DAY by day the same nothings that seemed so much, the grains of sand along the pathway of life, disturbed Eleanor Raymond's mind. Lady Margaret was kindness itself, not only to Eleanor, but to all around her. She contrived to converse even with Godfrey's common-place Emma. She nursed Emma's new baby; an obstinate-looking and not well-tempered baby, exceedingly like its father; and soothed it in its most irate moments with a spell such as the famous whisperer exercised on vicious horses. She amused Lady Raymond, and accompanied her in the little dowager drives, which had hitherto been solitary. She was almost an idol at the Parsonage-house with old Mr. Fordyce. I think she would have succeeded even in mollifying Godfrey, if she had not so pertinaciously defended David Stuart from all his criticisms, and shown so open a regard for him. She was not without sympathy in what Godfrey called his "Scotch pride." Now, if there was one thing that irritated



Lieutenant Marsden more than another, it was any lament over Dunleath.

“So ridiculous,” he said, “because a fellow once had a place in his family; some paltry Highland place, too, which nobody ever heard of except himself! Hanging on by departed consequence (such as it was), just to be able to give himself most intolerable airs about nothing at all.”

“I don’t think the paltriness of the place would make his regret more ridiculous,” said Lady Margaret. “It was the inherited home of the family for centuries. I don’t see why he should not be as fond of Dunleath as my brother of Lanark’s Lodge, and with as good reason.”

“I’ll tell you what,” said Godfrey, bluntly, “if Mr. Stuart was ill-looking and vulgar — not that I admire him; meagre, self-conceited fellow, with a step that’s half a saunter and half a stride — you ladies would give him up.”

Lady Margaret coloured violently. “I do not think Mr. Stuart has any vanity,” said she, “though he might stand excused if he had. I remember his mother; she was the most beautiful human being I ever saw, and he is very like her. But it is quite possible, as you say, that with such weak creatures as we women are, Mr. Stuart’s good looks may not be without their influence. On the other hand, I do not see why any great grief or anxiety should not command



one's sympathy, however misplaced we may think it. Objects we deem important are often trivial in the eyes of others; even the placing of our affections frequently seems absurd, especially with those who have no natural indulgence."

"Have I no natural indulgence, Lady Margaret?"

"Very little, either natural or acquired, I should think, Mr. Marsden," said she, with an arch smile. "You may be a good man; I believe you are a good man; I respect you. But you are not tender; you are not pitiful; you always take a harsh, scornful, suspicious view of things."

"I have quite as much indulgence, I think, as is consistent with strict justice."

"But strict justice is not what we are to deal out to one another in this world. God tries us all with such very different temptations. Only look round you, and consider what happens every day. One man is so surfeited with plenty, that his physician is extorting from him a promise to be more temperate, not to eat and drink to the injury of his own body; and another is in prison for stealing, may be, a loaf of bread, or a pound of bacon. One is crushed into sin by misery, and another pampered into it by luxury. How can we talk of dealing strict justice? Charity is what is expected of us. The charity which hopeth all things, and comprehendeth all things, even the temptations that would be no temptation to ourselves. But I



do not think you do allot strict justice to David Stuart."

"No?"

"No. What do you think of a man at his age, and with his talents and attractions, burying himself in the country for five or six years to educate a little girl? Is there nothing admirable in that? Nothing in his daily care and self-denial? Aye, even in his patience with yourself."

This new view of David's position and qualities exasperated Godfrey.

"Well, that is a little too much," said he. "No one asked the fellow to live here, except my poor mother, at a time when she was quite unfit to attend to business. It was done out of vanity, and to assume an authority he has no right to."

"He has entire authority over Eleanor."

"His residence here was to please himself; he had little choice I should think."

"You are mistaken; the Governor-General of India proposed to him to be his secretary, and my brother Lanark, though he never saw him, merely on the excellent report given of him, offered him five hundred a-year, and a home at Lanark's Lodge, to undertake the management of affairs for him."

"Well?"

"Well, he refused. He said he was too fond of Eleanor to leave her till she was grown up, and had no further need of him."



"Eleanor is much indebted to him," said Godfrey with a sneer.

"I am indebted to him; I am most deeply grateful to him. I think you are very unjust!" exclaimed she, with some agitation of manner.

"To whom?"

"To Mr. Stuart, to me, to every one. I remember your speaking quite bitterly of one of your midshipmen on board your last ship, because he said having to keep watch at night, gave him inflammation in his eyes."

"Because I knew the boy was talking nonsense; shamming. I knew by my own feelings."

"But you can't know by your own feelings," said Lady Margaret. "Who made your mode of thinking and feeling the standard and example by which your fellow-creatures are to be tried? God made one man strong, and another weak; one dark, another fair; one merry, and another sad. One cannot weep for sternness, and another's tears 'lie high,' as the phrase is. We are all as different as possible; we are all faulty, and we owe each other a continually running debt of indulgence; instead of which, we all walk through the world as if we were quite perfect, and provoked at not meeting with equal perfection."

"I am sure I don't expect to meet with perfection," said Godfrey.

"You always speak as if you did," interposed



Eleanor. "I never yet heard of any one praised before you, even for efforts and good actions which you must have approved, that you did not say he was a poor, weak creature — or a vain, rash creature — or that he did it from ambition, or self-interest, or" —

"You are becoming extremely flippant, Eleanor. If I said so, it is probable the person on whom I made the remark deserved it."

"Very possibly," said Lady Margaret; "but I say that only proves human infirmity in general. Show me the man who is *not* vain, or weak, or rash, or ambitious, who does *not* in some way mix his human frailty with his work, doing the same amount of good. Till then, I thank the man who helps me to bear my burden, though he touch it with labour-stained hands, or carry it with a slow and feeble gait."

"If you don't care whether the persons you associate with, are worthy or unworthy, there is a difference in our notions on these subjects," said Godfrey, doggedly.

"That is a very childish way of closing the argument. I mean what I say; that I no more expect to meet perfection in others than to attain it myself. I believe not only every one has faults, but every one has some great leading and especial fault; and as long as that fault is neither a very mean, nor a very atrocious one — as long as I believe they do their best to balance their imperfect nature by such good as lies



in their power, I am as ready to respect and love them as if my reason were a mole, and had no eyes to spy out their imperfections."

"Well, I am not."

"So it seems; but does it never strike you, that while you have no patience with one man because he is stingy, another because he is extravagant, a third because he is presumptuous, that there may be something in your own nature that makes them equally impatient? To exchange indulgence with them, fault for fault, would be best, don't you think?"

"I think, that in condemning where I see reason to condemn, I merely follow the principles of religion, and the dictates of common sense."

"Not of our religion, Mr. Marsden: you are a great reader of the Scriptures, but they cannot bear that interpretation. In all the history of our Saviour, there is not one wrathful sentence — not one speech of condemnation. He had sympathy and compassion for all human infirmities; for sorrow, for sickness, even for repentant sin. He went about healing and pardoning. Whether it was Jairus wailing over his little daughter, or Lazarus' sisters weeping by a brother's tomb, or the lame beggar who vainly struggled to the blessed pool for cure; the gentle Jesus felt for all. The last bitter moments he spent on earth, hanging in torture on the Cross, were spent in speaking comfort to the penitent thief. There is no-



thing recorded after that, but his exclamation in the death-pang. Oh! if ever a lesson of indulgence could be taught to man, surely we might learn it there! Even to those who deny and doubt the divinity of Christ, his life must seem one great and complete emblem of universal toleration!"

She spoke eagerly — earnestly; the tears were in Eleanor's eyes. Godfrey turned away:

"I did not expect," said he, "that we should fall into a theological discussion *à-propos* of Mr. Stuart's merits; we have had enough of it, and of him."

Eleanor agreed in every word Lady Margaret had spoken: she loved her for what she said, and the way she said it: but her memory lingered capriciously over the sudden and violent blush with which her beautiful chaperon had received Godfrey's imputation of being influenced by Mr. Stuart's appearance, to more indulgence than an ugly and ungainly man would have inspired. Why did Lady Margaret blush about her guardian's good looks?

With restless curiosity Eleanor sought to glean the history of the past. Patiently as a bird builds its nest, she gathered materials — here a feather and there a straw — to build a fabric for fancy to lodge in. But with all her pains, she learnt little more than the simple facts told the first day she saw Lady Margaret: that chance had made the lovely lady and her guardian, neighbours at home and abroad, and that



they were "great friends." Lady Margaret had been married to an elder brother of Mr. Fordyce, very much older than herself; and was a widow, not rich, with one little girl. They lived principally with the old Duchess of Lanark, Margaret's grandmother, at Naples, and they intended to return there at some indefinite time within the next two years, whenever the Duchess recalled them.

Her gleanings and her conjectures were unprofitable and absorbing to Eleanor's mind. She no longer took any pleasure in her usual occupations. She lost her gaiety, and became grave as she was when a little child. If she attempted to draw, visions of Dunleath rose up; scenes of early days; Mrs. Stuart and the Greek sun-dial; Lady Margaret and David as children wandering by the lake, or singing together on the hill-side among the heather, as she had heard her chaperon say they did. If she opened the piano, the keys remained untouched; while leaning her head on her hand in melancholy abstraction, she looked at the ivory notes as though they had done her some injury. The melodies Lady Margaret sang, floated through the dim silence. The thrill of those blended voices returned: every note, every cadence rose and fell as she had heard them the first evening, and often — too often since! If she endeavoured to read — for it had become an endeavour — she was haunted by fragments of conversation, proving how far beyond



her, in information and eloquence was the new companion at Aspendale, the "old friend" of Dunleath and Naples.

Of all the pleasant occupations that had divided Eleanor's life into happy hours, riding was the only one that remained unchanged. Lady Margaret was a coward on horseback: she could not ride. When she stood under the portico, smiling in the sun, shading her eyes with her white hands to see them mount, Eleanor knew that for the next two hours at least the pleasant life was sure again. She felt her momentary superiority; she felt that she could have rode over precipices, and swum her horse through rivers and lakes, dark with the foam of a thousand thunder-storms, sooner than have forgone her rides with her guardian. She was conscious of a sort of gladness that Lady Margaret could not accompany them. They were the only hours now that she spent alone with the companion of her childhood.

It was in returning from one of these expeditions, that David Stuart gathered some of the heather in bloom, which grew in the wild broken ground beyond the roaring Linn. Eleanor carried some up to her room, to put in her hair when she dressed for dinner. As she laid it down, she saw, from her window, Lady Margaret coming from the garden with a quantity of fresh roses in her basket. "Oh! heather — lovely heather! how it reminds one of the hills!" Eleanor



heard her exclaim; and as she took them from Mr. Stuart's hand, she kissed the purple blossoms with childish delight, and put some in Euphemia's straw hat.

David Stuart smiled, and said something Eleanor could not hear; apparently he asked for a rose, for Lady Margaret carefully selected one and presented it to him; then he said something more, at which she laughed merrily, but also blushed; that deep sudden blush which was so lovely, which was so strange, which agitated and puzzled Eleanor so. What had her guardian said? It must have been some comparison between her and the rose, and truly she was like one; or some allusion to the exchange they had made, for as he took the rose he pointed to the heather. What did it signify? What a wretched trifle to dwell upon! Why were such nothings become the only important moments in Eleanor's days? She looked down with a heavy sigh at Lady Margaret. They were still talking. She was feeding Mr. Stuart's horse with the roses, the beautiful roses she had just gathered; evidently she was not thinking of the flowers, she was thinking of what he said. What did he say? Presently the horse made a snatch at the remaining roses, and the basket fell from Lady Margaret's hand; she laughed, and Mr. Stuart called the groom to lead the horses away. Then Lady Margaret took his arm and



they walked back to the garden, little Euphemia tripping after them.

Eleanor stood still at her window; she heard the swinging of the shrubbery gate as they passed through, and the sweet joyous laugh of Lady Margaret, and the sound of receding steps on the gravel-path, and then she heard only the confused songs of many birds, the bleat of lambs in the distance, the hum of insects on the wing, all that aggregate of innumerable lives that men call silence. She leaned her head against the window-frame, and looked out on the sky and trees and the road before the house, lost in thought.

Reader, I once saw a flower blow. It was a superb specimen of that glorious bulb, the amaryllis. For its own sake it stood in the window, to glean the two hours of sunshine of a London sky; for the sake of the giver it stood near me, that from time to time when I looked up from my reading, I might as the French say, "caress it with my eye." Suddenly a sharp sound as of the striking of a large insect's wing against the glass, made me glance upwards. I saw it, — I saw that daily and hourly miracle of nature, in its act of completion: my flower blew; not as the rose blows, day by day unfolding its soft leaves a little and a little more in gradual beauty; but suddenly, with a glad start, flinging its deep rose-coloured leaves asunder, the heart of my young amaryllis lay bare to the light, and the sun saw a new worshipper on the



strong green stem which daily drew light from his glory. It was the act of a moment; but no human hand, no skill, no art, could have forced the shining petals back to their calyx. My flower had blown; to live its life of dumb loveliness to, look, as it did then, fresh as the dews of the morning; and afterwards waning in its beauty, to grow dimmer and more earthly, till a new and different compression should shrink those long pointed leaves, and bid them hang brown and withered, from the cup which was their cradle and their grave!

As my flower blew that morning to the natural sun, so woke the heart of Eleanor Raymond to the sun of love. Innocent and guileless as she was, brought up in seclusion, knowing nothing of the world or its ways, she was yet too passionate by nature to doubt the meaning of all she felt and thought. She suddenly comprehended that in her chaperon she feared a possible rival; that she loved David Stuart; that his marriage with Lady Margaret, or any other except herself, was a thought dark with jealous misery.

No new ray had fallen on her life, no phase of change had altered it, but the hour had come. Alone, musing with her sweet face turned like that flower to the light, the red flush of sudden consciousness swept over her cheek, and she almost whispered to herself the thought, "It is because I love him."

She loved! She too, might bloom, and wane, and



wither, but her heart could not be forced back to unconsciousness, any more than the leaves of my amaryllis, to the cold green calyx that had enclosed them.

She loved him. Well, why not? She could marry him. It was triumphant thought that she had wealth and comfort to give in addition to herself; that she did not come to him through poverty, and doubt, and difficulty, as Emma had come to Godfrey, but with all the advantages that could make earthly happiness easy. He need not, like Godfrey, have a dangerous uncertain profession to take him away from home, and leave his wife to listen to the stormy winds, praying for those at sea. Perpetual companionship, unbroken, undisturbed, would be theirs. They would go about doing good together, welcomed by their equals, beloved by the poor. It was a visionary life of calm and entire happiness. She would marry him; that is, if he loved her. If! What was she, that she should be preferred to Margaret? Margaret, with her wondrous beauty, playful wit, earnest goodness and eloquence? And yet she thought he loved her. Now she could explain to herself, those strange nervous contradictions of manner that had so tormented her: his sadness and abstraction at times. Yes, certainly, he loved her.

If he loved Margaret, why remain at Aspendale? why refuse the Duke of Lanark's offer through her of a home at Lanark's Lodge, and a settled destiny among Lady Margaret's own people? Surely, he loved *her*,



loved Eleanor, his ward, his companion, his wife that would be. Perhaps he himself had viewed his position as Godfrey had viewed it, when he desired her to be more dignified in manner towards one who had been only her father's man of business — as if the mere want of riches on his part was to divide them! And a superb scorn for riches curled the lip of the young heiress. He wished her to see the world, and make a choice; but he would find her choice was made, and the world could not alter it. Who could she see in that unknown world to be compared to him? Even Lady Margaret had spoken of his superiority to others in talents and attraction. Her mother had talked, half playfully, half in earnest, of the great match her little heiress was to make; but a great match is a very vague temptation at Eleanor's age. What did she want with rank and grandeur? Her ideal happiness was to be Mrs. David Stuart, and Mrs. David Stuart she would be!

## CHAPTER XII.

GREAT restlessness and disturbance of mind, even without any very heavy or painful anxiety, are bad for the health; and Eleanor, who could scarcely eat her dinner, for watching and calculating the great mystery of whether it were possible that Lady Margaret was more agreeable than herself to her guardian, became



as thin and pale as a sage who, with alembic and crucible, had wasted his nights and days searching for the philosopher's stone. The Doctor was called in. When doctors are a little puzzled, they always say the patient requires "change of air;" and accordingly it was decided that Eleanor should have change of air. Godfrey proposed they should make a trip to Portsmouth. He had business at Portsmouth. The port Admiral was an old friend of Sir John Raymond's. Lady Raymond would come too, and then they could all go to the Isle of Wight. All but Lady Margaret — she disliked sailing, even more than riding; she was always sea-sick; she would pay a visit to some Fordyce relations while they were gone; and when they returned, if Eleanor was well, they would go to London for the season.

Eleanor felt a pang of self-reproach at the secret gladness with which she heard these arrangements, which excluded her chaperon. That lovely and most loveable creature, who had become so fond of her, was it possible that she actually rejoiced at leaving her behind, when they set out on their holiday expedition? I am afraid it was both possible and true.

A real holiday, however, it was to Eleanor. The sea-breeze, the quantity of new objects, the long happy days, during which her guardian had nothing to do but to attend to her, brought back the colour to her cheek, and the light to her eye. Her mother, too,



was more than usually tender to her. Anxiety for her health was mingled with memories of her father; for Lady Raymond had never been at Portsmouth, that city of farewells, since she sailed for India with Sir John; and when she had said her gentle good night to Eleanor the first evening they were away from Aspendale, she still detained her, wistfully gazing in her face, till at last she laid her head, with a few feeble tears, on her daughter's bosom, and faltered out the words:

"You are all that remains to me of *him*, my dear child."

Eleanor felt grateful and happy. She was not superseded, as usual, by the overpowering love her mother bore to Godfrey. But Godfrey also was satisfied; he was in his element at Portsmouth, and his spirits were elated by the comparative insignificance to which Mr. David Stuart was reduced.

Godfrey was only a lieutenant in the navy. He was nobody in himself, but he knew a great many people. He was respected in his profession. There was great interest shown to the party he brought with him: the pretty, quiet wife; the pale and lovely heiress, his half-sister; and his mother, the widow of a man who had held an important command in India. Admirals and captains, who would under ordinary circumstances merely have returned the young lieutenant's stiff well-disciplined salute, relaxed into a



thousand agreeable attentions to Lady Raymond and her daughter. They were shown over ships, and accompanied through dock-yards, and taken to see the forging of anchors and the making of blocks. Many of the senior officers remembered Sir John, and were struck with the good sense and intelligence shown by "poor Raymond's daughter." They complimented Godfrey on his half-sister. As to Mr. David Stuart, no one thought about him; he dropped naturally into the rear; and when one of the officers asked another who that very good-looking fellow was, who belonged to Lady Raymond's party, his position was vaguely and carelessly marked out as having been "Sir John Raymond's secretary, or something."

All this was as it should be, and Godfrey was exceedingly well pleased. His manner to David Stuart involuntarily resumed something of the old imperiousness with which he used to inquire into the state of affairs, "in order to advise his mother on her plans;" and he secretly hoped that Eleanor would be sufficiently struck by the evidence of her guardian's real position in the world, to relax in the sentimental reverence she showed for his opinions and sayings. But Eleanor was lost in dreams; she did not notice all this. She was musing on ships and shipwrecks; Otaheite and Captain Cook; the life of Columbus, and the death of Nelson; the courage of the man who first ventured to sea; the wonderful discovery of the com-



pass; all sorts of wandering, crowding thoughts chased each other through her mind.

She and Emma stood close together, looking at the immense hot anchor they had just seen welded, from which the slant sparks were still flying, under the blows of the workmen. That giant anchor, what ship would it belong to? what would be her destiny? Smooth harbours in lovely southern isles rose to Eleanor's fancy; the palm and cocoa-nut growing up in the tropic sky; gorgeous birds of brilliant plumage flitting about; savages, graceful, idle, kindly and innocent, like the Incas of yore; and the ship coming in slowly, full sail, looking (as ships do look) more full of conscious life and volition, than any other thing put together by the industry and science of man. Then the scene changed. Eleanor saw the ship drifting over the boundless ocean in a midnight storm; her masts cut away, her rigging shattered, crowds of wave-washed men struggling to save her, to save themselves; the roar of the winds and the mountainous billows sounded in her ear, overwhelming the voice of the captain shouting to his crew. Thought is lightning quick. Eleanor got to the island Shakespeare peopled; to Ariel, Caliban, and that wreck,

"Which had no doubt some noble creatures in her,"

when Emma spoke:

"What a great strong thing it is," said Emma.



"I had no idea an anchor was so big! I hope Godfrey will be sure to have a strong one when he has a ship. He must be a commander first. I hope he will soon be a commander."

Eleanor's visions vanished. She looked round and smiled at her guardian. He came forward a little:

"Don't remain longer in this heat," said he, anxiously. "You look as pale as Miranda when she was expostulating with Prospero."

Eleanor moved away, leaning on the Admiral's arm, and smiled again brightly and fondly at David Stuart. He, too, she found, was thinking of Shakespeare's island. It was pleasant to her to know that his thoughts were the same as her own. They would talk it all over in the evening, all she had seen in that crowd and company of strangers.

Godfrey would have been in despair, could he have guessed how very different the impression made on his half-sister's mind was to the one he desired. I am sure he never could have walked on with that cheerful determined air by Lady Raymond's side, had he known that Eleanor was yearning for the hour when this parade would be over, and home-chat with her guardian begin; or even that the enthusiastic young officer, with whom David brought up the rear, was listening to him as to a sort of demi-god, because he had been on board an East Indiaman when she was burnt; interrupting his description of that



event by a running commentary of ejaculations: "Oh, Sir! what a scene, Sir! You are a fortunate man, Sir, to have been in her! I wish I had been there, Sir!" and other brief sentences, expressive of the satisfaction it would have afforded him to have had to struggle for life among charred timbers and floating wreck, after taking his choice of the chances of being burned or drowned. And David and he shook each other by the hand, at the gate of the Dock-yard, with immense cordiality, much to Godfrey's discomfiture, who wished Mr. Stuart to feel a little humbled and mortified, and was disturbed by his apparent unconsciousness.

Apparent; not real! This peep into the future, this vision of Eleanor removed from him by the common course of worldly events, was not otherwise than comfortless to David's heart; but his heart was full of other and heavier anxieties. As it was, however, it trebled the value of her smile; that silent method of communion which no crowd can prevent persons who know each other well from interchanging. Eleanor's smile, too, was peculiarly beautiful. Her expression, habitually grave and shy, changed to a sort of loving tenderness rather than gaiety when she smiled, fading slowly back to its original gravity — as unlike Lady Margaret's glowing brilliancy as possible, but beautiful in its way. David pondered over her smile; and again, and again, as it often did, the recollection of



her countenance as a child, came back to him — as a child, listening to him and pitying him in the early happy days. That God to whom all hearts are open, alone could tell why the recollection was fraught with pain to David Stuart; why there came over his own face the cloud of a momentary wild anxiety, and from his unclosed lips the moan of an unspoken prayer.

They crossed to the Isle of Wight. In vain had that little cockney paradise been trodden by millions of pleasure seekers; in vain had the coloured sands of Alum Bay found their way to innumerable toy-shops throughout the kingdom. To Eleanor all was new, fresh, and delightful. The honey-smelling creepers that grew on the grey stones and low walls at Niton; the deep green waves that crept in and out of the cavern at Freshwater, the gleaming white rocks of the Needles, the sunny days, the moonlights on the ocean, transported her with joy. Never was holiday planned that was so completely successful. When she received a letter from Lady Margaret, she almost hesitated to open it, lest some expression of regret or anxiety should break the spell of undisturbed delight in all around her; but Lady Margaret wrote very merrily.

“I am here,” she said, “among my country relations; very learned and well informed people; even the children are so over instructed, that I prepared for a visit to the nursery as for a college little-go exami-



nation. My friends are agricultural, but by no means simple folks. The process of tilling the earth, which used to be easy, is now performed by the most complex experiments. 'As ignorant as a plough-boy,' is a phrase fallen into disuse. Instead of 'whistling o'er the lea,' he goes calculating o'er the lea, what species of manure will produce 'an interstitial crop.' Mr. H. grows turnips like phœnixes out of their own ashes, and has just discovered that chalk will make as good a fire as coal.

"Conceive our old familiar friend the coal-scuttle, wearing a new face, and dismally presenting itself to notice, with half a bushel of white, ghastly, cheerless lumps, for all the world like the ghosts of the coals we burned in our childhood! 'Old King *Coal* was a jolly old soul,' his successor is a horror. All the pretty little endearing ways, all the playful fancies of our fire are extinguished for ever. None of the flickering and flaming bursts of gas and tar, mute brilliancies that were to us, as we sate alone, what jests and repartees are in conversation; but a dull smouldering, prosaic, detestable way of warming one's self. Even Mrs. Ellis will never teach the women of England to make their firesides pleasant under such circumstances.

"The fire is put out, and so are we; we cannot accustom our minds to the new embarrassment. What are we to do with our old tropes, similies, and metaphors? What will be the use of talking of the flame



of love, to a generation who burn red hot chalk? What is to become of that pleasant, confidential time, the hour before a winter dinner, when the November fire asserted its claim to be "light enough to talk by?" Shall we ever be able to tell each other anything worth hearing by chalk and candlelight? Our fire was a friendly companion — a kindler of cheerfulness — a household god. We talked of old memories and hopes to its cinders. Can we sit by the chalk, like billiard-markers? I rebel; I, for one, set my face against the pale intruder, and desperately insist on coals. Indeed, altogether, I am getting so tired of a pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, that I long to have a pursuit of ignorance. Oh! for an unenlightened friend! Oh! for a dear dolt, who doesn't comprehend or try experiments! I think of advertising in the 'Times!' 'Wanted, as companion to a lady, a Stupid Person; preference will be given to one who cannot write or read.'

"Meanwhile, I am glad to be able to write and read, that I may be able to write to you, and hear from you. Tell me all you do and see. Tell me of the regatta — if it is time for that beautiful sight; where the small vessels chase each other like a flight of sea-gulls over the water. Tell me of the charming nondescript young noblemen and gentlemen you will meet at Cowes. How well I remember their dress! The roughest of sailors' dreadnoughts, with polished



French boots, satin stocks, and turquoise shirt-pins. Some habited like sailors before the mast (always excepting the boots and studs), some inclining to be corsairs and Greek galliongees, with white trousers and scarlet sashes, (very handsome, I recollect, they looked), and some actually prowling about the sands in shooting-jackets (without a keeper), so prevalent was the mania for costume.

“Do not lose your heart to any of them, before I have formally introduced you to the London world. You will hardly know them again, when you meet them there.

“Give my kind regards to all with you; and believe me,

“Yours affectionately,

“MARGARET FORDYCE.”

“No, she does not love him — she cannot love him — or she would not write so merrily,” was Eleanor’s reflection, as she folded the letter, and looked out over the sea; and her heart seemed to lean and rest itself on that thought.

But pleasant holidays must end. The Admiralty yacht was sent from Portsmouth to fetch Lady Raymond and her daughter, as the last kindly compliment from the officer who had known Sir John; and with many a lingering glance around her, Eleanor stepped into the boat with the rest of her party, and was taken



on board. The wind seemed to have guessed her reluctance to leave the island, for after lazily impelling the "Fanny" about one-third of her course, it fell to a dead calm. The slackening sails flapped noiselessly to and fro, and then hung like a dead bird's wings against the masts. Godfrey fidgeted, and took short turns on deck. Eleanor sate apart, gazing on the sunset sky. She was thinking again of Lady Margaret; what she had lost by declining to accompany them — by not being able to sail — by not being able to ride; — and how, in a few days, they should all be together again.

"What a heavenly evening," said she to David Stuart, as he came and sate down by her. "Look at those soft strange tints, which melt so gradually that you cannot tell where one begins and another ends; and yet one side of the sky is ruby crimson and the other sapphire blue. How still, how lovely! now could I fancy myself a spirit journeying with its guardian angel to another world: but we are going back to the real common world, and its busy people," and Eleanor heaved a sigh.

"We will have another holiday when the London season is over," said David.

"I wish it was over, or never to begin; I have no wish to see the world at all; I shall never be able to talk to strangers. Am I clever, Guardy? When I had no one but Emma Fordyce to compare myself



with, I felt as if I was; and now that I compare myself with Lady Margaret —”

“She is nearly six-and-twenty and you are scarcely seventeen. That is a superiority of age; it is one which involves others: a little more reading of books and men, a little more knowledge of the world, and a greater aptitude of conversation. When your understanding is matured, I think you will master difficult subjects with greater ease than Lady Margaret. You need not doubt your own powers.

“And every spirit as it is more pure,  
And hath in it the more of heavenly light;  
So it the fairer body doth procure,  
To habit in.”

David repeated Spenser's beautiful lines in a low murmuring tone; he was watching Eleanor, who had taken off her bonnet, and was looking down into the fathomless sea. There she beheld the ever-haunting image of Lady Margaret's lovely face. Was she indeed six-and-twenty — so near thirty? She thought women near thirty ought to look a little withered, and faded, and old. That radiant creature — was it possible? The wonder occupied her so, that she did not heed the compliment to her own beauty conveyed in the lines her guardian had quoted. Presently he spoke again.

“Your mind has made a great start lately, Eleanor.”



"I have read so much and so carefully. I have felt my own deficiency so much more. When I hear you talking with Lady Margaret, I feel how immeasurable inferior I am. I comprehend what a sacrifice you made, settling at Aspendale with an invalid and a foolish child, instead of such society as would suit you."

"Do you think you do not suit me?"

"I think," said she earnestly, though with some embarrassment of manner, "that not understanding a person on the subjects which interest them, puts one in a sort of exile from them. I have felt, when some subject was started, of which I was wholly ignorant, as if there were suddenly a great gap between us, over which I longed to throw a bridge. Those who have read the same books, and know the same things, must be more welcome to you — more constantly in your thoughts —"

Eleanor stopped, confused. David answered in an agitated voice.

"No one is constantly in my thoughts but you, Eleanor. Would to God it were otherwise," continued he passionately and sorrowfully. "Waking or sleeping, abroad or at home, in the hush of study or the tumult of business, I see your dear eyes between me and my books, between me and the sky, between me and all that is in Heaven and earth, — reproaching me!"

"Reproaching you!"



At this moment an exclamation from the man at the helm, an imperious shout from Godfrey, and a sudden confusion on board, startled them.

"We shall be run down!" said David.

Lady Raymond and Emma shrieked; the sailors swore; Godfrey shouted again. A heavy black brig drifted down upon them; there was no wind, either to increase the danger, or enable them to evade it. Every one seemed asleep on board the brig, except the watch on deck. After a moment of terror, confusion, and noise, the vessels glided free of each other, grazing slightly as they passed. With a mechanical impulse of protection, David Stuart had encircled Eleanor with one arm, while he clung to the ropes with the other. He released her gently; and as he replaced the heavy boat cloak in which she had been sheltered, but which had dropped from her shoulders as she started up in alarm, he murmured tenderly:

"Were you frightened, dearest child?"

Eleanor strove to answer, "No!" Her heart beat wildly; she felt no fear; she only felt that if they had all died at that moment, she could have died happy; that if they had sunk down in that cold sea, and perished there, she would have been contented to know, as she yielded up life in his arms, that no one wiser, or better, or cleverer, or more beautiful than herself, could part her from David Stuart. Such a death had no terrors. In the strange excitement of



the hour, when he praised her for her courage, she lifted her shy, averted eyes for an instant, with the desperate words trembling on her lips:

“Why should I fear to die, dying with you?”

It was but for an instant. The shy eyes were veiled more timidly than ever, and the wild passionate thought sunk down again to her heart, as a frightened and weary bird sinks fluttering down on its nest.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Eleanor makes a conquest.

THE arrangements for a season in London were now to be made, a house to be taken, a double establishment formed, with Lady Margaret as head. She could not offer Eleanor a home: she had none of her own.

Since her widowhood, she had lived principally with the Dowager Duchess, in Italy. Her brother at first intended that she should reside with him, but that did not suit his wife.

The Duchess of Lanark, though she had also many merits, had a great fault. Lady Margaret, in her sweet cheerful way, said every one had their fault, and we should be prepared to make allowance. The Duchess of Lanark's fault was one very opposite to Margaret's nature. Her pretty little Grace was of a very jealous disposition. She did not like going out



with her sister-in-law. She loved and admired Margaret, but she was restless when others did the same. Somehow she felt eclipsed in her own home, when Margaret was there. The perfect tact which springs from perfect temper, taught Margaret what to do. She never sang at Lanark's Lodge. The Duchess did not like people to sing, unless they sang contralto seconds, and unfortunately Lady Margaret's voice went to C in alt. She never played the harp: the Duchess played the harp — played it beautifully; wonderfully; with arms as white and perfect as those which the Venus Anadyomene might have lifted above the sea-foam, and little pink-tipped rapid fingers so delicate and taper, that you felt, as a French attaché once told the Duchess, that “it was *merveilleux* how they could pinch the cords,” so as to produce such full-sounding, pleasant music as they did. Then Margaret had to dress Euphemia with great simplicity. The Duchess did not like the child to be confounded with her cousins the Ladies Maitland, especially since a certain occasion, when some stranger, imagining Phemy to be the Duke's youngest daughter, told him that she was the prettiest, and resembled him the most of all his children.

This childish jealousy of temper had given rise to occasional summer-storms, in spite of Margaret's willingness to “efface herself” in behalf of her sister-in-law. The latter had fits of displeasure, extremely



puzzling to lookers-on, and puzzling at first to Margaret, inasmuch as it was impossible to reconcile the degree of anger with the apparent cause; nor was the pretty Duchess herself, perhaps, always aware of the real root of her *guignon* against her good-humoured sister-in-law. She never analyzed her feelings, or attempted to control them. She had been a spoiled child, and she was now a wife, cherished and indulged, perhaps, beyond her actual deserts.

But Margaret grew accustomed to the peevish little reproaches made on trivial occasions, and with her usual generosity, she "made allowance."

In the main, the Duchess was kind; she always meant kindly. Her feelings were quick and keen. In hours of affliction and distress, she was tender and loving. She grudged neither time nor trouble to render service; but in the prosperity of those she had served, she grew restless. She could wipe away their tears, but they must beware how their smiles occupied or distracted any of the numerous circle, whose duty it was to bow down only to her graceful little self. Any one was welcome to stand next her, but none above her; and in the matter of conquests and admiration, people must only glean what she left. She was not positively glad when strangers thought Phemy awkward, or her beautiful mother too large in figure, but she was more complacent.

Margaret, too, had her fault. I never saw per-



fection in real life, or anywhere but in the pages of some impossible romance. I am loth to admit it, and I hope the reader will remember that I mention it in the strictest confidence; but I think Margaret was a little vain of being so very charming as she certainly was and was admitted to be, by all who had the happiness of knowing her. She was vain, too, of comprehending the leading questions in politics, and subjects which are generally supposed to interest men only. She was glad to be popular with women, and even children, but she was proud of being popular with men; and popular she was, to her heart's content. From her brother, Lanark, who simply thought there had been nothing like her since Eve was presented to Adam in Paradise, to the chance acquaintance who had the good luck to sit by her at dinner the day before, a unanimous vote was always given in her favour. The sweet cordiality of her manner had no forwardness in it, and was balanced by a certain stateliness and dignity, hereditary and natural; while her perfect temper, active kindliness, sincere and unostentatious piety, increased to love the admiration already inspired by her gaiety, accomplishment and beauty.

Now, the lovely little Duchess of Lanark belonged, as I have already hinted, to a class of women it is difficult to define: the class of conquest-makers. Women who look on at a temptation they do not feel, and which they have no intention of sharing:



women, many of whom I firmly believe would rather die than over-step the boundary which divides them from sin, but who cannot resist the dangerous triumph of encouraging the victims of their beauty. She took great pains to secure her conquests, even to the risk of her fair name; but if any admirer ventured to declare himself, she was amazed, annoyed, and generally quarrelled with him; throwing herself on the frank-hearted affection of her husband for protection against what rumours might arise out of the event, and visiting with unsparing dislike whoever was the next object of attention: a dog-in-the-manger system of coquetry not uncommon among women of the world.

The Duke of Lanark was a very proud man, and of a trustful disposition. He thought his wife rash; he believed her true; he did not choose that the world should probe what he felt. So, gravely, calmly, with what unconsciousness he could assume, he bore the occasional brunt of evil reports. So borne, they died away or passed lightly over. He took his own part against the world — instead of making common cause with the world against himself, as is the custom with some men.

The Duchess respected and felt grateful to him. If she did not absolutely relinquish conquest-making, she indulged more rarely in a heart-hunt. It was a home that bettered as years rolled on; but it was a home in which Margaret was *de trop*. It was impossible to



make conquests comfortably, with Margaret in the house. Her beauty dazzled and absorbed the most frivolous; and something real, honest, and earnest in her nature, attracted the serious. I doubt whether the last thought at night of two-thirds of the guests in any country-house where she happened to be staying, was not satisfaction at the certainty of meeting her fresh glad smiles at breakfast next morning. There might be those who would deny that they thought about her at all, but I would not give much credit to the assertion.

And so it was, that Margaret became an occasional visitor, not a resident at Lanark's Lodge; remaining on the best possible terms with her graceful little sister-in-law, who wrote her very long letters and professed (and indeed felt) a very sincere interest in all that concerned her.

Almost the first people Eleanor saw in London, were the Duke and Duchess of Lanark, and she heard them announced and looked at the Duke as he entered, with eager interest. In complexion, and a certain frank stateliness of demeanour, there might be a likeness to Margaret, but in nothing else. The Duchess was lovely; very small in stature, but with the figure of nymph; large, soft, surprised eyes, like a child's; a little affected, and excessively graceful.

Eleanor was disappointed in the Duke's appearance; she had expected Margaret's brother to be wonderfully handsome; but in character they were the counter-



part of each other, and she sighed to think what a happy brother and sister they were, and how unlike the terms on which she and Godfrey lived, was the proud fondness they felt for each other.

The Duke saw her, too, with interest; and his manner to his sister's charge was one of protecting tenderness. It was his manner to all women — the feeling of his heart towards them. No shadow of jealousy could have entered even his Duchess's mind, and yet all women felt instinctively that he was one from whom indulgence and chivalry to the sex were certain. Many women envied the Duchess her home; but it is not always the women who have happy homes who set most value on them.

Eleanor did not like London. Perhaps no one does, who is brought suddenly into that great whirlpool, and does not stay long enough to form their own circle among the eddies on the surface. Long enough to make slight acquaintances, but not to form friendships; long enough to see the fermenting of the scum, but not to taste the wholesome liquor underneath; to see the insolence, jealousy, frivolity, and mad battles of fashion, but not to learn that, with a few pampered and incorrigible instances, good hearts arise out of that turmoil, and go forth to home duties, to great charities, and rational employment of their portion of that divine inheritance — Time.



Eleanor's tastes, too, were essentially solid. She was amazed at the ballet, and bored at the balls. Dancing had no charms for her; reading, painting, riding, music, were her holiday occupations. These her guardian taught her; these he could share in. He was gone to Marseilles on business, and the London season struggled on without him.

When it was over, never was there a beautiful young heiress so glad to return to the country. She left London without regret, and her general acquaintance saw her go with indifference; the men said she was cold and absent; the women that she was shy and stupid; the Duke wondered that she had not been able to "catch something of Margaret's charming manner;" the Duchess (with rather doubtful sympathy) observed that her sister-in-law "extinguished" poor Miss Raymond. Yet Eleanor's beauty was undeniable. There was no brilliancy, no contrast; nymphlike, classical, colourless — the pale red of the small melancholy mouth, the grey hazel of the shy, passionate eyes, the soft brown of her luxuriant hair, all melting into one harmony of tint like a fair Italian picture — she stood before you. In vain the women said she wanted complexion; the men that she was too stately; the dancers that she was awkward; the fashionables (in spite of Margaret's reforms) that she was ill-dressed. You felt, when all was said, that there stood the type of the old ideal loveliness, worshipped in the groves and



temples of olden times; when the heathen heart, unenlightened and unable to reclaim even its divine aspirations from the trammels of sensuality, adored the Creator in form instead of spirit, and knelt to beauty as the nearest idea of God! Lone as a statue in a garden, she stood in that busy murmuring world; and recalled to you other statues; fountains, and fair columns; the dim aisles of foreign churches; the shadows of cypresses on warm Italian terraces; all that the mind could conceive or remember of classic perfection. She was the beau ideal of an artist's dream — the moving frontispiece to a poet's thought.

And like many other such ideal-looking personages, the strongest passion that Eleanor inspired, during her brief stay in London, was in a heart as coarse as ever was cast in nature's mould. Many young men, of small means and great expenses, thought of proposing for the beautiful heiress. One or two were seriously enamoured, or thought themselves so; but only Sir Stephen Penrhyn turned pale with sudden emotion when he heard they were to leave town. Only Sir Stephen Penrhyn came, at a late undue hour in his boots and frock coat, to the Duke of Lanark's library, to ask his advice, having been wandering about all day considering how he could plead his cause, and who he had best plead it to; and convinced (that greatest proof of love) that the whole world of bachelors were forthwith about to propose for Miss Ray-



mond, and that therefore his only chance lay in immediate measures for securing her hand.

Their acquaintance had not begun very auspiciously. Eleanor was riding over Wimbledon Common with the Duke of Lanark and a party of ladies and gentlemen, when her dog Ruellach suddenly chased the dog belonging to a gentleman in advance of the party. The animals quarrelled, and Ruellach, who was much the most powerful, had seized his adversary by the throat; when the gentleman whose dog was worsted, hastily dismounting, threw the reins of his horse to his groom, and violently chastised the enemy with a heavy riding whip. Eleanor's cheek crimsoned, and her eyes filled with tears.

"The man will kill my dog!" said she.

The Duke of Lanark rode up to the stranger.

"I am sure you are not aware," said he, courteously, "that the greyhound belongs to a lady in our party: to this young lady," added he, as Sir Stephen Penrhyn turned round with an angry stare, and Eleanor cantered her horse to the spot.

Cymon when he was softened by the sight of Iphigenia, could not have been more struck than the stranger at the aspect of Eleanor; flushed, tearful, a mixture of indignation, reproach, and compassion, agitating her beautiful features. He stammered out apologies; he wiped the dog's foot, which was cut by one of the heavy blows of the whip, with his handkerchief. He



pleaded with Eleanor that the dog had pursued and chased his own without provocation, and that it was a formidable looking creature. There was nothing for it but to bow and accept his excuses, and turn homewards; poor Ruellach limping along by Eleanor's horse, footsore, bleeding, and greatly exhausted by the violent beating he had received.

"Ruellach, poor friend," Eleanor said to him in tender, comforting tones, from time to time. "Ruellach, poor friend," she repeated, as she sat looking at him after they reached home; lying on the carpet, turning on her, while she spoke, a grateful glance from wistful, sleepy, bloodshot eyes, his foot swelled, and starting with pain. And she thought of the day her guardian brought the poor dumb companion from Scotland, two years ago, that seemed two ages; and of the dreadful strength of that man's arm, as he unmercifully lashed it; and Eleanor felt, on behalf of herself and her dog, that she was extremely ill-used.

From that day forth Sir Stephen Penrhyn haunted Eleanor Raymond like her shadow. He had never seen her before. He did not belong to the "smart set" of London society; he had not cared to belong to it. But now every one who gave or procured for him invitations which ensured his meeting Miss Raymond, commanded his gratitude; and as he had the reputation of being very rich, people were glad to oblige him. He got up late, to begin the day as near



as possible to the hour when he might see her. He called incessantly; he paid Ruellach the most devoted attention; he lingered in the park even when Eleanor was riding and occupied with others, till he saw her leave it. He ate his dinner in a sort of dream, as something done to fill up a gap of time in which he could not be in her society. There was no luxury he did not lend or give to a boy cousin of Lady Margaret's, a pretty little dandy getting through his first season in London on two hundred a-year, who got numberless invitations for "his friend Penrhyn," and told him what parties Eleanor was going to every evening.

Sir Stephen's Highland place, Castle Penrhyn, was in a very fair Scotch neighbourhood of Lanark's Lodge; that is, about twenty miles distant. The Duke knew his family: he received him very civilly and cordially. Lady Margaret gave him bright smiles, and jested Eleanor on her conquest. Even Ruellach, poor generous, forgiving Ruellach, welcomed him when he came with mute tokens of friendly recognition. Eleanor alone remained cold and shy; but then she was cold and shy to every one. So every one said; and Mr. David Stuart was not there to contradict the opinion.

The Duke, who was accustomed to the frank, impulsive manner of his beloved sister, and the demonstrativeness of his graceful little Duchess, declined offering any opinion as to the absence of evident pre-



ference in Eleanor's mode of treating her would-be suitor. He advised Sir Stephen to write to Mr. Stuart, and explain himself; and then no doubt he would receive an invitation from Lady Raymond, and might ascertain what chance he had of pleasing her daughter. At present, Mr. Stuart was still at Marseilles; but in a short time he was expected at Aspendale. The Duke did not know him; he had never met him; he could only therefore refer Sir Stephen to Lady Margaret for conjectures how Eleanor's guardian was likely to receive proposals for his ward, and what sort of person he was. And Lady Margaret blushed scarlet, and said Mr. Stuart was a most amiable and excellent person, and would think only of what would best secure Eleanor's happiness, to whom of course Sir Stephen must make himself acceptable as best he could. She had not perceived that Eleanor had distinguished any one. She was always shy. Did not think she was more distant with Sir Stephen, than with other acquaintance. On the contrary.

And with the slender comfort of this "on the contrary," as a wind up to all his questions, Sir Stephen Penrhyn saw that strange beautiful vision of a girl so unlike all the women he had ever met in his life, vanish from the haunts where he had daily contrived to meet her. I do not know anything more dismally blank than London when the *one* person has left it, or anything more curious than the impression given, by



the absence of a unit out of the countless population, that the great swarming city has been emptied of all its inhabitants. When Sir Stephen's valet asked for orders for the groom next day, his master had none to give. It did not appear to him that there was anywhere to ride to. He took a sauntering, moody walk, mechanically bending his steps to the Serpentine; his eye wandered over the mass of open and closed carriages, equestrian and pedestrian passers-by, without particularizing. He knew there was nothing to see — no one to recognise. *She* had left town! Life was at a standstill till he could write to Mr. Stuart, and receive an answer; a windmill whose sails had stopped work.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Proposals of marriage.

MR. DAVID STUART returned from Marseilles thin and dispirited. He said he had had a great deal of trouble, and a great deal of fatigue; and it was some time before even Margaret's cheerful laugh and winning ways, could sun him into comparative cheerfulness. As to Eleanor, poor little chameleon that she was, she felt far more inclined to take the reflection of his sadness into her own soul, than to remove it by —

"Quips and cranks and wreathed smiles."



They did not talk much of the London season, or the time they had been asunder. She had written to him all she thought important or entertaining during their stay in town. They relapsed into old habits, and old subjects of thought, and resumed former occupations: the rides which were so delightful to Eleanor, and the songs which no longer disturbed her so much; for she began to feel instinctively sure that it was with *her*, not Margaret, that David's thoughts were absorbed; and when his eyes wore that look of wistful supplication she first saw in them the day they talked of churches by the roaring Linn — the day he entreated her to "bear with him" — she translated it in her own way: into the doubt and fear that must cloud the progress of an attachment, which the world would think so imprudent on her part.

He evidently struggled against it; he would not suffer people to say he took advantage of his position as her guardian, and his residence at Aspendale, to persuade her to a marriage her friends must disapprove. Miss Raymond comprehended this: three months of a London season teaches us more than six years in the country. She comprehended that the choice which she had made to satisfy herself, would be extremely unsatisfactory to others. She guessed what "the world" would say. She had made its acquaintance in Hyde Park, at the Opera, and at Almack's. She knew how it wagged its tongue on all occasions,



and how adverse its decision on her affairs would be. She did not care about the world; but she was sorry and perplexed when she thought of her mother. The account of her success in those realms of fashion of which Lady Raymond had never more than brief glimpses, roused more ambition in the gentle widow to see Eleanor make a splendid match, than had as yet been obvious to her daughter; and Lady Raymond had above all things a horror of poverty — she had experienced it. Godfrey, though he had married for love, himself Eleanor knew would sneer at her choice, and blame the object of it. But she was determined, nevertheless; only she rather shrank from looking into the future. She wished things to remain as they were for the present, till she was of age perhaps, when no one could suppose her incapable of judging matters with the wordly wisdom peculiar to that venerable time of life.

Now and then, it is true, when her guardian seemed more than usually unhappy, she longed restlessly for some event that should force an explanation, which would put an end to his pain and uncertainty. That event would be, of course, some one else proposing for her: she would refuse: her guardian would ask her why: she would reply that she loved another. He would ask who: nothing could be more simple so far: and she would tell him, at least she thought and hoped she should by that time have courage to give



him to understand — the truth: but at present the very thought set her heart beating with such exceeding terror and confusion, that certainly Mr. Stuart would have gleaned little from any explanation she might offer.

Sir Stephen Penrhyn did not propose immediately. He had a sister; a sister much his senior, and who both before and since his father's death had governed the whole family with unlimited sway. She had been married to a Sir Patrick Macfarren, and was now a widow. Sir Stephen went to Scotland to break to her the important fact of his intentions. He had, as we have seen, considerable doubts of the success of his suit with Eleanor; but it appears that he did not think it necessary to mention those doubts to Lady Macfarren; to whom, on the contrary, he narrated the entertaining fable, that he had made the conquest of a most beautiful young heiress who passionately returned his regard, but that he had suspended his declaration in form to her friends, till he had paid the respect due to his sole surviving relative of informing her of the fact. And Lady Macfarren gruffly hoped he had not been "taken in," and said she thought there was little need to have gone hunting for a wife in the English counties, when he might have had "just the pick and choose" of the noblest-born ladies in Scotland; and being pressed by her brother to come to town in furtherance of this matter, she stated it to be



her opinion that it was just as easy for "other folk" to come to Edinburgh, as for her to go to London, and that therefore he might hold his wedding in that modern Athens, or perform the ceremony without its being blessed by the light of her countenance; with which instructions Sir Stephen returned to his lodgings in Grosvenor Street, and mused upon them, riding in in the dusty and empty park.

Finally, he resolved to postpone sending the letter he had concocted for the perusal of the omnipotent guardian, till Lady Margaret should return to town on her way to Lanark's Lodge, when he would consult her as to its contents. This involved the patience of a very few days longer. He thought Lady Margaret not unfavourable to his love; and he had that vague sort of conviction of her influence over every one, that he felt as if she could smooth every difficulty that might arise, either with mother, guardian, or the young lady herself.

And, indeed, Lady Margaret saw no reason why Sir Stephen should not be Miss Raymond's husband. She thought the sooner Eleanor was married the better. Her position was a strange one. All the fragmentary elements of protection which surrounded her, consisting of an invalid mother, scolding half-brother and romantic guardian, could not and did not, in Margaret's opinion, make up the stable, happy home, which



renders it indifferent whether a girl settles early in life or not. The lovely chaperon did not see how, now that Eleanor was a woman instead of a child, that anomalous household could hold together; how, especially after Godfrey should again go to sea, Eleanor was to continue living with this handsome attractive man who was no relation to her family, and whose age and appearance so ill assorted with the original "Guardy" of old comedies, whose title Lieutenant Marsden had so wrathfully objected to his acquiring.

Nor was that, "on the contrary," with which Sir Stephen's anxieties had been pacified the day he made his adieu, at all an exaggeration. Margaret always spoke the simple, honest truth. She never departed from it, for her own sake or the sake of others. It was the simple truth then, that Eleanor's manner had rather more welcome in it for Sir Stephen than for others. Eleanor disliked him, because he had beat her dog; that beloved favourite which had been presented to her by her beloved guardian. But in her heart she thought herself very unjust to entertain so strong an aversion to a gentleman who had after all only beat a dog that attacked his own; and who had been so very kind about it afterwards, bringing a particular ointment for Ruellach's foot, and dressing it himself for the few days it continued sore and inflamed, and long after it was well persisting in calling (to see how the animal prospered); therefore Miss Raymond



made an effort with herself and smiled shy smiles now and then at Sir Stephen, to show she was not utterly implacable; and patted his rough terrier with a friendly and pardoning hand, as the involuntary and innocent cause of Ruellach's tribulation and wounds.

And though this may be held to be small encouragement to a lover, such things are matters of comparison; and Eleanor gave no encouragement whatever to any one else. Not even to Lord Edgar Oswald Beauregard, second son of the Duke of Beauregard, the most exquisite dandy of his day, who sang, rode, and danced, and had such a profile as never was seen except in the Vatican chipped and chiselled in ancient marble. Not even, I repeat, to Lord Edgar, who, though he mentioned it to no one, had a far more sincere conviction than Sir Stephen that he had only to propose, to be welcomed with transport by the young heiress and all her relations and friends, whosoever, and wheresoever, they might be. But Lord Edgar did not propose just at present, because another young lady came out that same season who had ten thousand a-year, and Eleanor had only five, and he naturally waited to see whether he had any chance with the ten, before he dropped to the five. At present the odds were twenty to one in favour of the ten thousand, who was greatly dazzled by the appearance of the beautiful dandy, and could scarcely be curbed by her prudent old father in her enthusiastic confidence that she was



beloved entirely "for herself," by this Apollo of the English aristocracy.

Sir Stephen did not feel Lord Edgar's uncertainty. Rich or poor, no one had ever struck his fancy with the same wild passion as Eleanor. If she had been a beggar-maid, he would have copied the example of King Cophetua, a monarch whose fame has perhaps been more extensive than the circle of his imitators.

So Sir Stephen read over daily the copy of his letter to Mr. Stuart, and scratched a word out and put a word in (for he was not greatly addicted to letter-writing, and the composition cost him some trouble), till there it was, a clear business-like explanatory letter, meet for a guardian to read who was bound to see his ward disposed of to proper advantage. He explained how he had eighteen thousand a-year, a place in Wales and a place in Scotland; how he intended to stand for the county in which his Welsh property was situated, and was sure of success; and how he was connected with a marquis, a viscount, and no less than three earls, one of whom, the Earl of Peebles, being an invalid sixty-five years old, unmarried, and without children, it was highly probable Eleanor might, in the course of years, attain the honour of being countess of that name. Together with other particulars, such as he judged might, with the prudent indulgent and exemplary gentleman Lady Margaret had



described Mr. Stuart to be, weigh in a suitor's behalf, and cause a favourable decision of his claims.

As to Eleanor, he refused to doubt his power of pleasing her, even while his mind misgave him. He had never been in love before, and failed to win. To be sure, his previous fancies had been in a very different line; but he reflected that it was no use "shilly-shallying:" a fellow would never take a dangerous leap out hunting, if he sate on his horse craning and looking over his neck at it. He would propose. "Faint heart never won fair lady," (which was one of the very few quotations Sir Stephen knew) and so he read his letter once more, and copied it out for the last time, previous to submitting it for Lady Margaret's approval.

## CHAPTER XV.

Godfrey examines the consciences of others.

LADY MARGARET was still at Aspendale, cheering David, coaxing Eleanor, amusing Lady Raymond, and battling with Godfrey's prejudices. His last trouble was that Euphemia did not go to church twice on Sundays. It was most improper that the child should be brought up to consider her Sunday duties over, when the morning service was concluded and she came home to her roast fowl and bread pudding.



He wondered that Lady Margaret, with her excellent principles, did not see this.

“Euphemia is not very strong, and I doubt whether any child can really force its attention through two long services such as our Church appoints,” said Margaret, quietly.

“It is sufficient that the Church has appointed them. A child ought to be compelled to attend, and corrected if it is inattentive; that would be my system.”

“It is not mine; and I should hope my poor child’s evening prayers are not the less acceptable to a merciful Creator because she has not sat half asleep through a long sermon in the afternoon.”

“It is most pernicious to teach her that she may judge how much, or how little, she is to accept of the forms of her Church; that she may do as she likes about prayer. I must confess I was somewhat astonished when I saw you both this evening sitting in the church porch, knowing that Euphemia had not attended service.”

“But have we no right to sit in the porch unless she attends afternoon service?” said Lady Margaret, laughing. “We sat there to enjoy the sweet evening, Euphemia being tired. The clusters of the traveller’s joy and Virginia creeper, reminded us of the cemetery at Frankfort, and we were speaking of the beautiful inscription over the gate of that burial-ground —



‘God’s Rest.’ God’s evening rest, when the toil of life’s day is over! Our talk was very innocent and unworldly, I assure you.”

“Of course; no doubt, Lady Margaret; but she might have rested somewhere else. Not to attend church, and then to saunter past and sit down at the door!”

“My dear Mr. Marsden, I should have been glad, instead of sitting down at the door, to have gone in with the child, and prayed in the church, but for the English custom of locking out prayers till next market-day is over, and the Sabbath come round again. But I repeat that I consider two services a-day too much for Euphemia. Do you think she could learn nothing in the church porch? It is a solemn place. It is impossible to sit there, and not think of those who have passed through for many generations — the pious, the careless, the chance visitor, and the villager, who perhaps never heard prayers except in that one church; living and dying without ever straying from his native place! The very stones are worn away by the pacing of the feet of those whose prayers in this world are over. What congregations have poured silently out of the narrow entry, each bearing his own impression of the hour; none knowing what passed in the heart of his neighbour; none saying, ‘Brother, what smote you?’ and yet we know that at some time words spoken within, have consoled the grieving,



rebuked the sinful, converted the sceptic, or awakened the worldling. And the preacher has gone out last, — not knowing whether God has called, by the instrumentality of his weak voice, one soul nearer heaven than on the preceeding Sabbath. A church porch on a summer's evening, is a sermon in itself."

"Sermons in stones, and good in everything," said David Stuart, with a smile.

He looked at Lady Margaret with such affectionate admiration, that Eleanor's heart fluttered. Perhaps she was a little influenced by it in the observation she made:

"I think Godfrey is right though, in saying we should beware of judging how much we will accept of forms. I think we stand on dangerous ground when we attempt to choose for ourselves out of appointed ceremonies. Like flowers and weak trees, we are the better of being trained, even against our natural bent. I think that is right, though Godfrey always expresses himself harshly."

"And I think you are right, though you always express yourself affectedly," said her half-brother with something of a sneer.

The fallible David was provoked at his tone; perhaps a little provoked, also, at the moderate upholding Eleanor had given to the excellent Pharisee; and above all he was provoked at his interference with Lady Margaret.



He, too, had seen her sitting in the church porch; talking with radiant, serious eyes, to her little girl, and had passed on, unwilling to break in upon her discourse. He thought Godfrey's lecture insolent and absurd, whatever truths it might involve.

"We are not disputing the value of forms," said he; "though 't is certain that I have seen fiercer hatred, more grasping avarice, more worldly ambition, more selfish luxury, and more sneering at the misfortunes of neighbours, among professed religionists, and twice-a-day church-goers, than in any other set or section of society. It is well the days of burning and racking are gone by, or some of us would stand an excellent chance of torture, on the judgment of men every way our inferiors both in the theory and practice of religious duty."

"I do not know in what I am your inferior," said Godfrey, catching at the words, "unless it be in what I believe is termed in your country the 'gift of the gab' — stringing long sentences together. A man can see what he ought to do, and do it, without being inordinately clever or book-learned. Right is right, and wrong is wrong; church is church, and prayers are prayers. We are here to attend them, not to settle whether they are too long or not."

"I spoke generally, and not with a personal application to yourself," said David, haughtily; "but if I must make a remark of that sort, I should say that



whatever is right or wrong, your attempting to teach Lady Margaret how to bring up her own child, is presumptuous and ridiculous. Men of your stamp live under a singular delusion. Having made, or thinking you have made, your own peace with God, does not give you a right to disturb the peace of every one with whom you are sufficiently familiar to discuss these topics. Your own convictions, late or early, do not transform you suddenly into a sort of John the Baptist, a wandering preacher, calling on others to repent. Every one must abide by their own heart; you are not their self-appointed judge. One man can kneel and fast; another is too weary to kneel, too weak to fast. There must be a certain latitude and discretion, unless we were all cast in the same mould, body and soul."

"You are good enough to lecture men of my stamp," said Godfrey, with excessive anger. "Now, give me leave to tell you, that men of *your* stamp, are men with indian-rubber consciences; men who stretch what they ought to do, to the length of what they want to do; men who find an excuse for themselves at all times, under all circumstances; men who can commit great sins, and forgive themselves so easily, that you would think they had done nothing at all; men to whom the fact of a temptation is sufficient apology for a crime — who won't stop at the beginning, and can't face the end —"



"Godfrey!" said Eleanor, in a voice choking with emotion.

But David Stuart walked slowly up to young Marsden, and laid his hand gently on his shoulder, as an elder brother might have done. He was deadly pale: he spoke in a faint altered tone. Lady Margaret and Eleanor looked at him with surprise.

"Godfrey," said he, "you are right; you are a better man than I am. I am unfit to guide or lecture any one; and I ask your pardon for the expression, 'men of your stamp.' They *are* better than men of mine. Nevertheless, for your own sake, and the sake of those you love, strive for tolerance!"

After a pause, he added, hurriedly: "Let us have no more discussion: let us go out. Eleanor, will you come out? The room is suffocating: the air here is like the air before an earthquake. Lady Margaret, do you remember the earthquake at Palermo? how the ceilings cracked, and came down, and we thought the whole house would fellow? This reminds me of it."

Lady Margaret said she thought it was a very sultry day; and she added, rather timidly, she thought Mr. Stuart must be ill.

It was very seldom that Lady Margaret looked grave or mournful; but the tender beauty of her face at that moment, struck Eleanor.

"Oh!" thought the poor girl, "it is impossible that any one should be preferred to her. It is im-



possible he should think of me, while she is here. I wish she would go; I wish I had never seen her."

It was by Eleanor's side, nevertheless, that David Stuart ranged himself, as the party left the house for their walk.

"*You* are tolerant, my Eleanor," said he, sadly, and as if the conversation had never been interrupted; "you are tolerant and generous. I believe there is nothing you could not forgive."

"What have I to forgive? What ails you?" said Eleanor, in a gentle, pleading voice; but he did not reply.

"David Stuart has something heavy on his conscience," said Godfrey sternly, as his wife passed her arm through his.

"Has he, dear?" said Emma, and she gave a little gulping sub; for nothing frightened Emma like a scene of any sort; she never understood what was the cause of dispute, or why people were so angry; but she comprehended that there was what schoolboys call "a row," trembled while it lasted, felt relieved when it was over, and if Godfrey spoke very loud, or with unusual bitterness, generally cried, as infants do when grown people quarrel before them.

"He has something on his conscience," thought Godfrey; and, occupied with that thought, he did not talk at all to his wife during their moody walk, nor did she attempt to win him from his silence. She



walked on, looking over the corn-fields, full of blue flowers and red poppies, and wishing she had her baby boy with her; but she had been afraid to ask Godfrey to wait till she had put on the child's straw hat, because, when he was thinking of other men's consciences, he was apt to be rough and violent in his replies.

A heavy thunder-storm drove the whole party home again after a short interval. Eleanor lingered in her mother's dressing-room. When she came down, Lady Margaret had taken out her work: Godfrey was ruling the track of the "Thetis," across the Pacific: Emma was fitting his pen in a small pair of compasses: David Stuart was watching the rain from the window. They seemed a very silent party. Eleanor glanced at David — hesitated — and sate down by Lady Margaret. The latter looked up, and smiled archly.

"I have had a letter by this evening's post," said she, "from Sir Stephen Penrhyn; he wants to submit to me a certain epistle which is coming here. I dare say, Mr. Stuart, in all the long letters Eleanor wrote to you, she never told you the adventure poor Ruellach had on Wimbledon Common?"

"Yes, she told me a gentleman had beaten Ruellach; it was some time ago."

"And has she never mentioned the gentleman since?"



“Why should I mention him?” said Eleanor, rather indignantly.

“Well now,” said Lady Margaret playfully, “I think myself a very ill-used chaperon. I take a young lady to town, and to all the smart balls and parties. In our very first day’s fishing we spear a salmon; that is, in our very first season we catch Sir Stephen Penrhyn — a very rich and puissant seigneur — and no credit is given to me, and Eleanor asks why she should mention him! Mr. Stuart, I give you fair notice to expect a proposal any morning, in the middle of your breakfast; your consent in form, lawyer’s parchments, settlements, my invitation to the wedding — all that is in immediate perspective. If Eleanor won’t marry him, then, in the distant perspective, we have another season in town, and my duties as chaperon recommence next spring.”

Eleanor lifted her eyes with a half blush and smile to her guardian’s face; its expression startled her. Pale, haggard, and scrutinising, his gaze was fixed upon her as if he would read her very soul. With a rapid furtive glance she scanned the rest of the party; Margaret’s head was bent over her work with a pretty mischievous smile; Godfrey was still ruling the ship’s track; and Emma was watching him. Eleanor breathed more freely: she was unobserved: she clasped her hands with a look of deprecating affection: never did dumb expression say so well, “be comforted, it is *you* whom



"I love!" Margaret raised her eyes at the same moment; David made an effort to speak.

"Eleanor is very young," said he.

The words stuck in his throat; he looked wistfully at Lady Margaret; came forward to the table; opened a book; shut it; took up the scissors which lay by Margaret's work; attempted to speak again; turned ghastly pale; and almost immediately left the room. One of Margaret's sudden blushes suffused her brow, cheek, and neck. She looked at Eleanor, but Eleanor's eyes were fixed on the handle of the door which her guardian had just closed. Was it possible that David Stuart was himself in love with Eleanor?

Like the shock given by the torpedo, the same thought thrilled at once through all the little circle. Margaret somehow thought it the most unlikely thing in the world; and yet what else could she suppose, after the scene she had witnessed? To Godfrey, who had looked sternly at the pale, gazing man as he stood at the table, it was

"Confirmation strong,  
As proofs of Holy writ;"

and his anger rose like the waves in a storm, at this crowning offence of his half-sister's guardian. Even common-place Emma seemed struck by some sudden revelation; even to her, it appeared, "that Mr. Stuart did not at all like the thoughts of Eleanor's marrying."



But for Eleanor herself, who shall tell the feelings that fluttered in her heart? She answered Godfrey's flashing glance with a smile almost of triumph, and moved to the window where David had been standing. She flung it open, and stood looking on the roses sparkling with rain, and the tall gleaming lilies splendid in their freshened beauty. The chorus of birds, so joyous, so multitudinous after a thunder-storm, sounded in her ear; the drops hung like jewels on the leaves; the scent of heliotrope and geranium met the breeze, already loaded with the perfume of distant clover-fields. It blew softly over her cheek and hair, like the lady in Shelley's Sensitive Plant —

"You might see that the coming and going of the wind  
Brought pleasure there, and left passion behind."

She trembled with the very certainty of her joy; for now she *knew* he loved her. Before this hour she had hoped it, but now she knew it; now she was sure of it; now it was clear as the glorious sun, whose warmth was drinking up the vanishing drops from the smooth lawn before her. And deeply must he love her, so to lose all self-command when her marriage with another was mentioned. But not more deeply than she loved him: that was impossible! That he should love her as well, was all she asked of Heaven.

Two days after this little scene, Lady Margaret's visit ended, and she went away. She bade Eleanor farewell with tender seriousness.



“God bless you, dear child, and make you happy, whatever is decided for your future,” was all she said.

She had never alluded to what had passed; no one had spoken of it, at least not to Eleanor. And Miss Raymond embraced her chaperon with more frank affection in that parting hour, than all her grace, kindness, and charm, had been able to inspire, while the doubt of a possible rivalry remained.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Love's young dream.

THOUGH Godfrey had said nothing to Eleanor, he had said a great deal to his mother; so much, indeed, that Sir Stephen Penrhyn himself could scarcely be more anxious for his marriage than Lady Raymond. She really began to take the same view as Godfrey, of the heinousness of her late husband's secretary aspiring to marry her beautiful heiress; and in her maternal solicitude for her daughter, and weak submission to her son, to adopt his notions that the whole residence at Aspendale, while Eleanor had been as yet only a child, the refusal to entrust her education to any other hands but his own, the pains he had taken with her, were so many portions of a deep-laid plot to obtain an influence over her affections, which no one should be able to uproot. She blamed



herself for having invited his stay in the first instance. She entreated Godfrey to consider what should be done, and whether it was likely Mr. Stuart would venture to declare himself. Godfrey thought not; he thought he would wait till Eleanor was of age, finding pretexts in the meanwhile for not bestowing her hand on any suitor.

Lady Raymond was rather sorry Lord Edgar did not propose: she would have much liked a Duke's son for her son-in-law. She wished it were possible to wait, to see whether Eleanor might not make some very splendid match. But Sir Stephen was a million times preferable, to the chance of her becoming Mrs. David Stuart. Poor child! she must be bewitched to desire such a thing. Perhaps she did not desire it: perhaps all this time Godfrey was mistaken as to the thoughts that were passing in his sister's mind, when she smiled as she passed him, crossing to the window, the day of the thunderstorm. She might be thinking of Sir Stephen. Lady Margaret had persisted that what little encouragement Eleanor seemed capable of giving to any one, was certainly bestowed on him. Lady Margaret said *she* did not think him handsome, but most people did. He had a very fine figure, and rode particularly well, which was all she had observed.

Altogether the doubt of Eleanor's sentiments was so great, that Lady Raymond thought it more prudent



to leave her daughter unquestioned. She contented herself with giving Godfrey plenipotentiary powers to speak to Mr. Stuart on the subject of Sir Stephen's attachment, and to make him understand that Miss Raymond's family approved of it, and desired to see her married.

David Stuart heard all with stony gravity. He then said that he agreed with Godfrey, that in Eleanor's position the sooner she was married the better, and that he would do anything, short of forcing her inclinations, to bring about the desired event. Godfrey left him with a positive abhorrence of the profound hypocrisy and self-command which had succeeded his evident grief, alarm, and agitation, when this marriage was first mentioned.

At length Sir Stephen's letter came. The morning it arrived, Mr. Stuart sent in word that he was too unwell to breakfast with the family, but when Miss Raymond had breakfasted, he wished her to come and speak with him in the library. Eleanor obeyed the summons — she was pale, but resolved. She felt too certain of his attachment, and his consequent struggles, to entertain a fear, natural under the circumstances, that he would think her forward for granting a love that as yet had never been sued for. Perhaps now he meant to tell her he loved her, and adjure her not to bestow her hand on another. That would be a far easier conclusion, than the confused



notion of giving him to understand that she would not marry another, because she preferred himself. She hoped it would be so. It would spare her much.

When she entered the library, she saw at a glance how ghastly pale and ill her guardian looked. But that did not startle or disturb her; she had expected it. She expected to see him look as he did the day of the storm. He said, in a low calm tone that he supposed she knew why he had sent for her; and she said firmly that she guessed it was to hear of Sir Stephen Penrhyn's proposals. He read the letter which had cost Sir Stephen so much pain and perplexity, and paused. He then pointed out the advantages of the marriage, and the wish Lady Raymond had expressed to see her daughter settled. Eleanor trembled. Like many persons in great agitation, she tried to assume a playfulness of manner.

"I must refuse him, Guardy, nevertheless," said she. There was a Shakespeare lying on the table, she drew it towards her: "I must refuse him like Olivia, and for Olivia's reasons: I have heard you read them very often."

David remembered the lines; they floated mechanically through his brain, as his haggard eyes rested on the graceful hand that touched the book:

"Your Lord does know my mind; I cannot love him!

Yet I suppose him virtuous; know him noble;



Of great estate; of fresh and stainless youth;  
In voices well divulged; free, learned, and valiant:  
And in dimensions and the shape of nature,  
A gracious person — but yet *I* cannot love him —  
He might have took his answer long ago."

David sighed heavily.

"You do not wish to marry this man, Eleanor?"

"I cannot love him. I could not love him even if —"

"If what?"

"If I had seen no one that I preferred," said Eleanor, with desperate courage. Courage that was needed; for this time her guardian positively started. He struggled, however, for composure.

"You love some one else?" said he; and Eleanor waited, her head feeling dizzy and her hands cold, for the next question — who she loved. But David did not ask who. He breathed hard and closed his eyes for an instant, struggling with some inward agony. Then he spoke, in much the same voice as before.

"Is he rich?"

The question was unexpected, but Eleanor tried to turn it to account in the way of explanation. She answered in a low nervous tone:

"No; he has no more than my father bequeathed to you."

All calmness of manner forsook her guardian.

"Eleanor," said he wildly. "Do not speak to me of your father; speak of what is before us; this man



— this marriage — this letter; you cannot marry a poor man; it is my duty — it is your mother's wish — I sent for you to say —” here he suddenly paused, and flinging his arms forward on the table, he laid his head on them and groaned aloud. Eleanor rose from her seat and crept to his side, trembling in every limb.

“I love another,” said she, “with my whole heart and soul. That being so, you cannot expect me to marry Sir Stephen Penrhyn. I have no desire to be richer than I am; I am rich enough for both.”

“Is it Lord Edgar?”

“No, oh! no. How can you think me capable of such a miserable choice? I that have been your companion so long!”

“Then name him, Eleanor; have compassion on me, lest I go mad — lest I go mad before I know what is to become of you, unhappy child! I only ask you to name him — I can then advise — we shall know what is possible — Eleanor, my little Nell, name him!”

He drew her towards him, with a forced and painful smile, which vainly contrasted with the haggard anxiety of his eyes; he spoke as he used to speak to her when she was a little child; he smoothed her hair as he did in those days, caressingly. There was something strange, something terrible in his manner; its forced gentleness and patience; its smothered wildness



and pain. Eleanor stared helplessly in his face; she yielded to the force of his trembling grasp, and bowed forward. Her hand leaned for support on his shoulder; she bent, till her checked and uneven respiration came warm on his bloodless cheek. She strove to speak, but found no utterance.

“Whisper it, Eleanor,” said he; and he turned his head away, as if to make it easier to the embarrassed girl to make her confession. Still with the manner he had to her in years gone by. And Eleanor tried to obey, but no sound came; no sound but the pendulum of the clock, and the loud strong beating of that man’s agitated heart, as he listened and waited for her words. She heard that: it seemed to strike on her very soul, with a vibrating strength; her own strength failed, and she fainted.

With fierce despair and self-reproach, David Stuart saw the dark lashes sink down over those lovely eyes. He lifted her and laid her on the sofa, and was lingering in momentary doubt whether to wait her recovery or ring for her maid, when the library-door opened, and Lady Raymond entered.

With a start and a shriek she advanced to Eleanor, followed hurriedly by Godfrey.

“Good Heavens, what is the matter? What have you done to my child, my Eleanor? Are you fit to be my child’s guardian? What is to become of us? my Eleanor!”



"Miss Raymond fainted during the discussion of that letter," said David, tossing Sir Stephen's carefully worded epistle across the table to Godfrey, who stood sternly lowering at him.

"Whatever ails my sister, it is very obvious she would be better under female care. She did not faint when Lady Margaret discussed this marriage with her."

The haughty contempt of Godfrey's manner was lost on David Stuart. He was watching Eleanor, who had re-opened her eyes. She smiled vaguely, and put out her hand to him; he kissed that blanched hand. The whole world might have stood by and cursed him aloud; he heard nothing, saw nothing but that pale girl; his poor Eleanor; (his, more than he knew or could guess, choked as that unuttered confession had been;) lying there in the library, where they had first met; where the fragile child who was now a passionate woman, had crept gently in to ask him of her father's death. Her father — his friend — his benefactor — who trusted him with his child's destiny! What would her destiny be? Who did she love — who did she love?

He was conscious of reproaches addressed to him by Lady Raymond, while he stood lost in thought. Of some gentle pleading from Eleanor to her mother: but what, he knew not. Of Eleanor being led away to her own room, persisting that she felt well again,



and of Godfrey's remaining and talking to him fiercely and scornfully of the necessity of his guardianship being put on a more formal footing, and of Eleanor's marriage. But in all this nothing distinct; nothing that he could answer; he was like a man struggling with nightmare.

At length he was conscious that he was left alone. It was a relief; he dropped into a chair, and again buried his face in his hands. When he looked up, the last glimmer of sunset was fading out of the autumnal sky. He rang for lights, and wrote for some time. Then he sent for his own servant:

"Sandy," said he, "here are some papers Miss Raymond will have to read in the morning; as soon as she is dressed, give them to her. I think I shall be obliged to go to London by the early mail. You need not wait up for me. I will walk across the park."

Eleanor saw David Stuart that night. She was sitting at the open window feverish and sleepless. He had come round by the terrace, and was standing with his arms folded, looking up as it seemed to her room. Some lines recurred to her, which she had heard Lady Margaret sing; the altered version of a most passionate little poem, which could scarcely be sung as it was written, and the original of which is perhaps unknown to half those who sing it:



"I arise from dreams of thee,  
And a spirit in my feet  
Has led me — who knows how?  
To thy chamber-window, Sweet!"

She murmured the words to herself restlessly. She longed to go down into the still garden, over the dewy grass; and there, in the dim moonlight, tell him what she had failed in saying that day.

But he would think it so strange! She was in her dressing-gown; it was impossible she could go down so; and she must pass her mother's room, who slept very lightly, and was very nervous. So she remained; watching David Stuart, as he stood looking paler than ever, in the light of the cold white moon.

Presently he moved; he stretched his arms towards her; and for one startled instant, she thought he perceived her watching him. But that could not be; for he let his arms fall with a weary desponding gesture, and passed round where the shadow of the corner of the house fell dark across the lawn, and then she saw him no more.

Early, very early in the morning, Eleanor dressed. She had not slept; she could not sleep; she waited restlessly for daylight, for the usual hours, when the loneliness of night would be over, with its troubled watchings, vague resolutions, and weary thoughts; and she could go to the library and see her guardian. Eleanor thought at last she had hit upon a very easy way of telling him her difficult secret. She could not



say "I love *you*;" she felt more than ever, since yesterday, that that was impossible; but she would say that she wondered at his supposing she could have formed any attachment out of the home-circle round her — that she never wished to see it changed. Then he must guess, after what she said yesterday, that he himself was the only person she thought of marrying.

After all, it was only one hour of pain and embarrassment, with a life of serene happiness lying beyond. That life was only just beginning, and she laid down its hopes at his feet; to shape the future as he pleased; to govern it as he had governed the past; only not to leave her; not to give her away to some enamoured stranger, who had made her acquaintance the other day at a ball or party; who was not the friend and companion of years; of whom she knew nothing; with whom she never could be happy; in whose home she must dwell like a caged bird pining to fly back to its nest in the wild wood; pining to return to Aspendale!

She could not live anywhere, but at Aspendale; nor with any one, but David Stuart. So Eleanor passed slowly along the corridor, and down the broad oaken staircase, pausing at every step, on her way to the library to offer up her life and hopes at the shrine of the unconscious idol. Only with a feeling of compassion which idols do not inspire; (for she could no



but recall the obvious anguish he had suffered the day before,) and which he had taken so much pains to quell. When she made her final halt at the crimson cloth door, whose opening was to usher her into that loved yet dreaded presence, she smiled to think how often, when a child, she had paused at that very landing, with her slate and copy-book in her hand; conscious of a half-learnt lesson, or guilty of some monstrous blot on the hastily-written exercise.

The recollection encouraged her; and with the smile yet lingering on her lips, she pushed open the heavy door, and entered. Her guardian was not in the library; he must have quitted it lately, for the wax taper on his writing-table was still alight, burned down to the socket; and his papers scattered about.

Eleanor rang the bell, that she might send him word she was there. That was better than seeking him in the breakfast-room, where perhaps Emma and Godfrey were already established. When she had rung the bell, she moved towards the writing-table to put out the light. Something strange in the aspect of the room, suddenly struck Eleanor: some inexplicable evidence that it had not been arranged since the preceding day. Her glove was lying on the chair, where she had sate during part of the conversation before she fainted; the chair was exactly in the same position; the volume of Shakespeare had not been moved, which she had drawn towards her in her embarrassed



effort at a playful comparison between herself and Olivia. There had been a fire in the grate, even on the warm evening preceding; it had burnt out, and was full of the light floating ashes of consumed paper, which stirred in the draught of the chimney as Eleanor approached.

“Sandy,” said she, as the servant entered, “where is Mr. Stuart? why is the library not ready this morning? what is the matter?” for Eleanor felt already that something was the matter.

Mr. Stuart was gone to town; he had spoken of it the night before; and the housekeeper thought it a good opportunity to have the library thoroughly swept, and arranged, which the housemaid had not yet begun to do.

Mr. Stuart had left a packet for Miss Raymond to read through, against he came back. Eleanor breathed more freely; it was something connected with her proposed marriage; at least he had written to explain his sudden journey; perhaps Godfrey and he had talked matters over, after she had gone to her own room the previous day. She had not seen any of them after that. Her mother had wished her to keep very quiet, and not even to come down to dinner. She did not know what had passed during the remainder of the day; she was to learn it now. She sate down, as Sandy closed the library door, and opened the packet:



it contained law papers, letters, and a letter from her guardian.

Ah! perhaps — perhaps he had taken courage to own in writing, though not in speaking, how hard his fate would seem if she forsook him; how dearly he loved her; how miserable he had been since Sir Stephen's letter came; how unhappy, struggling against his attachment for months before! Perhaps, on the other hand, Godfrey had spoken harshly, and they had quarrelled, and her guardian would not come back till she had decided as to her marriage; and Eleanor's indignation rose against Godfrey.

She held the unsealed paper in her hand for a minute or two, doubting, and considering thus; as we have all of us done, when the letter we hold would at once resolve all doubts into certainty. Then she glanced over the hurried agitated scrawl, wondering; and then she read the first two lines. It was long before Eleanor could read further, so sudden and terrible was the horror which froze her heart.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

The trust betrayed.

“ELEANOR,” the letter began, “when this reaches you, a censure upon my memory is all that will be possible to human judgment. Begin then by pardoning me. The greatest criminal can only pay for his crime with the forfeit of his life. All may be told in two words: you are a beggar, and I am infamous! Your father left me to guard your fortune; I have risked it, I have lost it; your mother has nothing, you have nothing, all is gone! If bearing a life of infamy could serve you, or retrieve your injuries, I would live and face the future; but there is no hope — no hope.

“I wish to write collectedly; but I have felt, since this morning, like one who walks in a dream. The post which brought the letter I sent for you to read, brought to me also a letter; brought the desperate confirmation of impending fears, which, though lifted away by faint hopes at intervals, have embittered the last two years. Life was agony even while hope lasted. Now hope is gone, life would be hell. I go where reproaches cannot reach me. Your mother has reproached me — your brother — without knowing how little or how much I deserved all the bitter words they uttered. They imagine — but why should I cloud your innocent spirit with their imaginings? It is enough



that of that of which they thought me guilty, I am innocent; but guilty of crime, blacker in dye a thousand times than any they have fancied. Return to Lady Raymond your father's last letter. Godfrey Marsden brought it to me and desired I would read it over. Tell him it had the effect he intended. Tell him it stabbed me to the heart, though I needed no further wound. I do not know that I could have lived, even if I had not read it. But I know I cannot live with its words glaring before me. Oh, Eleanor! they are written in words of fire on the surrounding air! The memory of his love and trust in me, accursed that I am, is my sentence of execution!"

The letter was broken off and resumed in more regular and less hurried writing:

"I have been very incoherent: it is necessary you should know all, as briefly as I can tell it. When Mr. Christison died, and Dunleath was for sale, you may remember that I went to Scotland. I had a hope then, with the money your father bequeathed to me, to purchase the house there; leaving the shooting land for sale. By some strange, some evil chance, at this very time a bank in India connected with one of the great firms in Edinburgh, suspended payment. You would not understand if I were to attempt to explain the business in which I then engaged. It is sufficient to say, that the loan of an enormous sum only for the time necessary to communicate with the Indian firm,



would save both banks from breaking; while the rate of interest for this all important loan would at once put me in possession of a sum more than sufficient to realise the dream of my life, the repurchasing Dunleath. Eleanor, why say to you now, that I had sore struggles with myself? Why plead, that mercantile men of sound and sane views thought it a safe speculation; that lawyers and men of business combined in the decision that I risked nothing in lending the money.

“I made the loan, and the two houses in Edinburgh and Calcutta redeemed their credit and stood firm. But there was some uneasiness from the accounts given of the folly, or worse than folly, of one of the partners in the Indian house. I suffered anxiety from day to day, from hour to hour. My first punishment (how heavy it seemed then — how trivial now) arose from the fact of Mrs. Christison changing her mind about the sale of Dunleath. Her daughter resisted the sale, and she yielded. They were obstinate; I found I had put all in jeopardy for no tangible end. The anguish of uncertainty, the terror I endured, who shall comprehend? When I returned from Edinburgh to you, I seemed to bring with me a shadowy fiend who wandered for ever at my side, whispering ‘If all should be lost!’

“All *was* lost!

“When Lady Margaret arrived at Aspendale, a gleam



of sunshine crossed my path. She brought with her, documents which had been forwarded to my agent in town, showing that the loan and interest would be remitted in all probability within the next two months. I breathed again. I felt more happy. Dunleath and the past seemed nothing: the future was all: I lived for the hour when I should be able to know all was as before. That hour never came! Delays, uncertainties, complicated embarrassments, the failure of another house at Calcutta connected with the same firm, the rascality of one of the Indian partners, and the imprudence of others, combined to throw affairs into confusion again.

“One of the partners arrived at Marseilles. He refused to come to England. I went to meet him. His statements filled me with gloomy fear, though he himself seemed sanguine; and earnestly besought me to trust his judgment, and empower him to act for me with the Indian firm. At length the crash came. Both houses stopped simultaneously. One of the partners shot himself; one went to America; and out of the wreck of millions nothing is recoverable! The news reached me yesterday. I received at the same time, Sir Stephen’s proposals for your hand.

“When first that matter was adverted to by Lady Margaret, while affairs were yet in a condition which it was possible to retrieve, I confess I hoped that you would refuse this man; that you did not love him;



that time might yet be granted me, before the inevitable exposure of the steps I had taken with respect to your fortune. I thought, if I could delay this or any other marriage, it would be well; but in the horror of yesterday's news, the one gleam of light, the straw at which my drowning soul caught, was that you might love him, and that your marriage with one so wealthy might spare you the change I had brought upon you, and my disgrace be all your pain. You did not love him — you loved another; all was lost!

“Oh! Eleanor, when they speak of me, as they will, as they must speak of me; when all curse me with just contempt, set against my crime years of remembrance. They will tell you I lied, when I said that I loved to you tenderly from your childhood; that I prayed God to do my duty by you; but it was true, Eleanor — it was true!”

\* \* \* \* \*

The letter was again broken off, and the remainder was so blotted as to be scarcely legible.

“I have been out to look my farewell at your window. Oh! how still and calm is this sultry night. You are wrapt in a holy and quiet sleep, in the keeping of God's good angels. You have prayed; prayed it may be, for me. I can neither sleep nor pray.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Who do you love, my Eleanor? I shall never



know; but if he is poor, I have cursed his happiness and yours. Oh, think well, if this is but some girlish fancy! The interval was so brief for you to fix your whole affections! If this is only a wandering dream, try to receive Sir Stéphen's proposals with welcome. Love, at your age, is an illusion oftener than a reality. You may live to smile at the notion of the love you now entertain."

\* \* \* \* \*

"But what am I, that I should advise you? It is I who have chained and crippled your life: it is I who make choice difficult; happiness perhaps impossible! Where are the days when I thought to serve and aid you? I have destroyed you — I have destroyed myself — I have defrauded the widow and the orphan!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Wandering like a demon spirit, seeking rest and finding none! If the night air was natural, it would have cooled my brain; but Heaven is against me. I cannot breathe; the sultriness is dreadful; your window is still open. Oh, lovely gentle child, let my miserable farewell reach you in your placid slumbers only as the air of heaven. Try to believe me! by the happiness of the past, — by the anguish of the present, — by my sin and my despair, — I took up the charge your father left me, as a sacred task. My life was dedicated to it. If I had thought of myself, I should have left you for India [or Scotland. I thought of



*you!* Who will believe me? One hour's temptation blotted out years of endeavour, and vows for a life-time! Their reproaches ring in my ears: their reproaches, untrue and yet just. The voice of the dead joins with them in bitter upbraiding. Even you, it may be — even you — on whose mercy I count, (what right have I to count upon it?) even you, if you love, may upbraid me. You cannot wed him you love, because he is poor, and I have beggared you!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"It seems as if I could have died with less pain, feeling certain of your pardon. But that may not be. Oh! if I could tear my heart out, and die so — I would do it. I leave your home — I leave the pistols I had loaded — I will not pollute the house with my blood. Silent as my shame, death shall close over me. There, where we have often sate together — there, where you promised to bear with me — I will die. Let the grey moss covered stones by the Linn, seem to you as the tomb of a miserable friend. If you can curb your heart to accept this wealthy man who loves you so entirely, do. Marry, and leave Aspendale; and if by God's mercy you are happy, come some day to the Linn — some day of peace and sunshine, like those we have known there — and breathe a forgiveness for me!"

\* \* \* \* \*



“It is darker; it is the hour before dawn; the dawn I shall never see. Oh, Eleanor, have mercy on my memory! Do not let them curse it before you — for the sake of the days when you were a child — and I was your true guardian.

“DAVID STUART.”

What followed the reading of that letter, Eleanor herself in the after years, could never clearly or entirely recollect. There was a search; wild confusion; exclamations of horror and blame; sounds of weeping; doors opening and shutting, or left standing open, while many persons hurried to and fro; messengers riding past the windows, the hoofs of their horses seeming to tread on Eleanor's brain; the sound of the clock, striking first one hour and then another, as it struck on usual days, when time was measured for life and not for eternity; and then — how or from whom she could never precisely recall — the confusion of horror was disentangled, and made definite and clear. Some one had ascertained the precise spot at the Linn, where the suicide must have destroyed himself. The earth was scraped, as by some one slipping or letting himself drop from the roots of a scathed tree, that projected over the black shining pool beneath the waterfall. A torn handkerchief still hung on one of the leafless branches. Its bright colour, fluttering in the morning breeze on that ghastly sapless tree, told



those who searched where to pause. They did not find the body; the pool went too far underground, there were those who were brave enough to dare the eddies in light, and the darkness beyond, for a little way, to try and drag the wretched man out of the death pool, and give him burial; but to no purpose. They all returned — and Eleanor knew that David Stuart was dead; drowned in the roaring Linn!

There were other thoughts, she knew, connected with this event. How she had now no fortune; the money her father left her being gone. How her guardian had never loved her; all his agitation and strange abstraction being the terror of an unconvicted criminal, which she had mistaken for love. How her mother and Godfrey would now, with justice, wring her heart by sitting in judgment on him who was gone. But these considerations troubled Eleanor but little as yet. She rather knew they were there, to be hereafter dwelt upon, than was conscious of a present meaning to them. The plunging horror was too recent, to admit of the outer eddies and circles of thought widening themselves on the surface of memory. One only thought beat backwards and forwards in her brain, like the surging billows in a sea-cave. He was dead! drowned in the roaring Linn. He was DEAD. From under the oppression of that sentence, Eleanor could not move. It lay across her heart like a bar of iron; if she struggled for some other idea it



crushed her back again with its heavy monotony of anguish.

David Stuart was dead — drowned in the roaring Linn!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

A change of circumstances.

THE news of a terrible event spreads like wildfire. Within the next four-and-twenty hours, all the neighbourhood far and near, knew that Miss Raymond was penniless, and that her guardian had committed suicide. The confusion and misery at Aspendale was increased by a misfortune more especially affecting Emma. Old Mr. Fordyce had a stroke of the palsy that morning, and she went home to nurse her father.

Lady Margaret, who had got as far as Edinburgh on her way to Lanark's Lodge, returned to nurse and comfort Eleanor. Never was friendship more needed. Eleanor seemed stupified by her grief. She wandered from room to room, sitting down when she was too weary to stand — gazing at the objects round her — starved and faint. For seven years she had taken her place by his side at meals: the attempt to eat anything choked her. All day long she wandered thus; looking out with a sad stare on the road before the windows; that beautiful winding road, edged with chestnut and beech trees, where they had so often cantered



home together; where Margaret had fed his horse from her basket of roses, the day Eleanor first felt conscious that she loved him. Looking at his books, but not opening them, for fear of seeing the well-known pencil marks on favourite passages, made by his hand. Looking at his writing-table, where she had found the taper still burning that morning: and thinking how dreadful seemed the life of that flame, which he had lit; and which had burned long past his death-hour, though the dawn and the sunrise he never saw.

Not daring to go to her mother; Godfrey sate with her mother; Godfrey, whose burst of execration remained in her half-conscious memory like the loudest crash among peals of thunder heard during a fearful storm. And her poor mother wept and moaned; repeating for ever one single sentence:

“Oh, if Sir John could know how his trust has been betrayed! Oh, if Sir John could know!”

All day long she wandered, alone with her grief; and when night came, she sate shuddering and still alone, thinking of that other night, of death and silence and preternatural sultriness; listening to the moan of the autumn wind; the wind that was blowing over the garden flowers where they would walk no more; the wind that was blowing over the cold restless waters of the Roaring Linn: and seeing nothing but his visionary eyes — those eyes whose tenderness



was like an unspoken blessing, whose look of displeasure had seemed to Eleanor in childhood, like that of a rebuking angel: those eyes which had closed for ever, in pain, remorse, and despair!

And in the dim, mournful night she prayed for the suicide; for God's mercy upon him who had braved it by departing, uncalled, from this world of appointed trial. She prayed for him; for there are few women who in their hearts do not lean to prayers for the dead.

It was late on the fifth night that Margaret arrived. Eleanor was no great weeper, and deep grief is sometimes very stony. She was sitting mournful and unoccupied in the half-lit drawing-room, but she rose with a smothered and convulsive shriek as Margaret entered — beautiful Margaret, whom she fancied once that he loved — and advanced to meet her. Lady Margaret's eyes were swelled with excessive weeping. As they met, she again burst passionately into tears, and catching Eleanor in her arms, she kissed her head, her cheek, her hands.

“Ah!” she sobbed; “I thought I had wept till I could weep no more. My Eleanor, my poor child, this is a bitter day! But you forgive him: I am sure that you forgive him! He is gone — let us bury his faults! We must think what can be done, my poor Eleanor. Oh, who would have believed it of him? he that toiled so patiently to help his mother all his spi-



rited boyhood; he that never owed a farthing, all his tempted youth. Oh, Eleanor, if his mother had lived to see this day! She was removed in time; there are griefs and losses that are God's special mercies, and we, blind worms that we are, will not see it. My dear, dearest child, what an opening of life for you. But I am a fool! I came here to comfort you — to think what can be done: I have left Euphemia with the Duchess: I will have no thought, no care but you, till we see how things can be settled. Is everything gone? I know nothing but the fact of his death, and your loss of fortune."

Eleanor gave Margaret her guardian's miserable letter of explanation, and she read it with tears and broken sobs, and passionate exclamations.

"There is no excusing what he did," said she; "but, oh! what he must have suffered."

Margaret's grief for David, comforted Eleanor. She did not analyse it; but it soothed her to be with some one who spoke tenderly, who did not execrate and blame him, as every one did. Every one, except poor old Mr. Fordyce, who had sent for Eleanor the day before, having rallied from the paralytic stroke enough to speak and understand what was said to him; and had written to her a few sentences in which the words "poor David Stuart" were all she clearly made out.

*Poor David Stuart!*



Eleanor looked at the good pious old man who had befriended and instructed her childhood; as he lay helplessly there, his grey hair combed smooth by his servant, his blanched hands powerless and still; and she felt a gush of love and gratitude in her suffering heart. The words comforted her, in spite of the smile with which they were spoken: the shocking gentleness of that wandering paralytic smile, which always looks as if the soul were half way on its journey to another world, and but half conscious of beholding what it loved on earth.

Margaret's kindly presence was a comfort and relief to every one; her quenched gaiety and brilliancy were replaced by a degree of active thoughtful tenderness, such as Eleanor had never witnessed in any one. She went about like a ministering angel, lifting Lady Raymond's crushed spirit, comforting frightened Emma, talking to old Mr. Fordyce as to a child — amusing that clouded spirit, making a gleam of cheerfulness for him, where all had been horror and alarm. Caressing Emma's little children, who were left stranded between the fright of their mother in attendance on their grandfather, and the stern angry gloom of Godfrey. Helping Godfrey himself, with household accounts and arrangements rendered necessary by the crash which had fallen upon them. For Aspendale must be given up; everything must be sold; a great change must come to all. A great, miserable change.



Lady Margaret thought that as soon as all was ready for that change, Lady Raymond might move to the Rectory; but, meanwhile, though agents, and valuers, and lawyers came down from town, though inventories were made and business transacted all day long, Lady Raymond was never troubled. The door of that luxurious dressing-room was as if it had been the boundary of another world. She lay there on a sofa, in helpless unmolested sorrow, as in the days of her widowhood, when David Stuart first came to Aspendale. The bustle, and confusion, and vexation of spirits; weary exertion; early comings-in and late goings-out, reached her not; her uselessness was held sacred.

Not so with Eleanor; in all that was necessary to be done, she had her share. Lady Margaret knew the value and the duty of exertion in hours of grief, though Lady Raymond did not. It had pleased God that Eleanor's youth should be clouded by a great horror, and she had also to begin the world with utterly different prospects as to riches or poverty. Let her face the future with calm and rational submission to whatever was appointed for her. No one knew what that future would bring forth. Nothing was certain except that a great deal of present and immediate exertion was required. Let her make that exertion.

Eleanor showed herself worthy of her guide: and,



only that these are the scenes the world does not witness, it would have been a sight to touch the hearts of those who had often watched the lovely chaperon enter a ball-room with the shy heiress, to see those two toil together through one of their weary days. The tender care of the pale girl which Margaret took, and yet the rational energy with which she inspired her. The profound sense of God's will in all things, with which she put on one side all murmurs of despair, and yet the cherishing comfort she gave. Always active — not always calm — perhaps Eleanor would have loved her less, if she could have been always calm. Sudden and passionate showers of tears replaced poor Margaret's sudden blushes; but her tears interrupted nothing of the duties of the hour. From the time she rose, and first met Eleanor in the morning, till her clear voice read the evening prayer which preceded their parting for the night, she missed no opportunity of service or of consolation.

And Eleanor loved and respected her; and would have laid bare her every thought of her heart — except one: except that she had loved her guardian, and fancied that he loved her. Over that, the feelings of her young heart closed in silent gloom, as the deep sea closes over a sunken wreck.

And Margaret, whatever might have been the impression produced by David's strange agitation the day of the storm, and when she had first mentioned



Sir Stephen's proposals, knew enough now to convince her, that love for Eleanor, at least such love as they had fancied, was far from David's thoughts. Even his last letter, tender and despairing, was rather the letter of a guilty father to his injured child, than any other relation.

To Godfrey only, Godfrey, whom least of all Eleanor would have chosen as her confidant, did she speak in a moment of passion and suffering, so as to leave on his mind the indelible conviction of the attachment she had felt.

He had entered the drawing-room abruptly, with an open letter in his hand; he paused, and remained standing, gazing on Eleanor. At length he said gloomily:

"These events have made my mother fearfully ill."

There was a tinge of accusation in his tone, as if Eleanor were responsible for the past horrors. Her lips blanched, and she answered faintly:

"I, too, have been very ill."

"You are young, you are comparatively strong, you cannot suffer as she does; and but for your fatal encouragement of that wretched man's assumption of authority, he would never have presumed so far on his position."

"Good heavens, Godfrey, I was a child; I knew nothing of these affairs; — what terrible, what shocking injustice!"



“You were old enough to encourage and countenance him to a degree that rendered my mother a complete cypher in her own house. The question now is, what is to be done? I have already restored by deed to my mother, and after her to you, ten thousand pounds of Sir John Raymond’s bequest to me; the remainder was settled on Emma at our marriage, and I have no power over it. I might have sunk the money in a small annuity for my mother, but I do not conceive I should be doing strict justice towards you.”

“Oh! do not speak of me — do not consider me — let my poor mother have whatever there is.”

“It is not from consideration or regard, but because I think it right;” said Godfrey, harshly. “I conceive I best fulfil my duty by restoring the money which was Sir John Raymond’s, to his daughter. I am not to consider my own inclinations or compassion. He would not have bequeathed it to me, had he foreseen you might be penniless. I tell you what I have done; it adds but little to my mother’s comfort, though it will destroy my wife’s in a great measure, and throw me on my profession for an income. You have more in your power; and you owe it to my poor mother to do all you can.”

“I — have more in my power?”

“Yes. Sir Stephen Penrhyn is still willing to marry you!”



“Willing?”

“Willing: proudly and scornfully as you echo it. There is his letter.” Eleanor glanced at it; it was directed to Godfrey.

“Sir,

“Not knowing exactly who to address myself to, after the exposure of the swindling transactions in which it appears Mr. Stuart was engaged, I write to you. I never sought Miss Raymond for her fortune; the late event, therefore, makes no difference in my sentiments. Miss Raymond may wish, under the circumstances, to make the condition that Lady Raymond shall reside with us. Will you state that this will be perfectly agreeable to me.

“Waiting your answer with great anxiety,

“I am, Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“STEPHEN PENRHYN.”

“Oh! what a letter,” said Eleanor, as the sudden picture of her mother’s dependance on this man, who spoke so slightingly of her lost guardian, rose to her startled mind. “Oh! what a letter; never — I never can be his wife.”

“I do not know what fault you find with the letter,” said Godfrey; “he assumes your consent; I presume he has built on your encouragement; and in the most



frank and straightforward manner, he goes to the next natural point and concedes it. When you know the world, you will know that he is acting generously by you."

"He does not express himself very generously by — others," said Eleanor, with hesitation and sadness.

"How should he? How should any honest man? The infamous treachery of Mr. Stuart —"

"Godfrey," said Eleanor passionately, "let there be an end of this. Say what you will to others; blame him, curse him, if you will; if you have the heart; but to me, to *me*, let his name and his memory remain sacred! He has perished for his fault — for the fortune I would have given him ten times over, to have saved him a day's uneasiness. Oh! that he were here," continued she, with increasing vehemence, "oh! that he had had patience with life, till I had said to him, 'think no more of it; live; be content; I will earn my bread with you — for you — I will be a governess, a servant.'"

"You will be a Bedlamite, I think," said Godfrey bitterly. "I tell you my mother's fortune is gone, with the fortune you were so willing to lavish with yourself on Mr. Stuart, but which it seems he preferred taking without the incumbrance. My mother is reduced to poverty; her health shaken, the decline of her life embittered by horrors and anxieties, created



by the very man who was sacredly empowered to protect her; and instead of feeling as you should about her, you rave and rant about a man who, if he had not drowned himself, might have swung on the gallows! It is very fine to talk of going out as a governess, but is my mother to go out as a governess?"

The last sneer was lost on Eleanor. Pale, shuddering from head to foot, she sat clutching at the arms of her chair, as if the words Godfrey had spoken would have had power to sink her into the earth but for that support, and looking wildly in his face.

At this moment, Lady Margaret entered. Any one who remembers Pasta's fond and piteous caress to her children in the *Medea*, previous to singing the "Miseri Pargoletti," the folding of her graceful hands round those little heads, can form some idea of Lady Margaret, as she came forward and folded Eleanor to her bosom; and Eleanor turned and leaned there with a faint moan. The colour flushed in Margaret's cheek.

"What is this, Mr. Marsden?" she said.

"It is, that Eleanor does not choose to hear crimes called by their right names, nor Mr. Stuart's conduct called in question. Infamous hypocrite! with his religion, and piety, and love of the poor!"

Lady Margaret was greatly agitated.

"He was not a hypocrite," said she. "It is the



misfortune of weak and irresolute persons that they *seem* hypocrites. He had no strength, and he fell: he is dead — leave the judging him to God! His duty was to guard Eleanor's fortune, and he failed: your duty, in this hour of terror and misery, is to comfort and succour her: are you doing it? Oh! Mr. Marsden, how can *you*, who were yourself an orphan, substitute harshness for protection, where it is so much needed!"

"My harshness," said Godfrey, with bitter triumph, "appears to have been a fairer estimate of Mr. Stuart's character than you ever would allow; and so the end has proved."

He stalked from the room. Margaret turned to Eleanor.

"What is all this? What was he discussing with you, my poor child?" and she stroked the hair back from her forehead, and kissed her.

"They wish me to marry Sir Stephen Penrhyn," said Eleanor, in a despondent tone; "he has written again. Godfrey says my mother is ruined, and that I ought to consider that."

"But do you not like Sir Stephen? It seemed that you preferred him to others, that —"

"Oh! no — no!"

There was a pause. Then Margaret spoke, in a low clear coaxing voice, full of pity, and sweet as her own songs.



“Eleanor, I am sure — I know — that Godfrey has contrived to say whatever he has urged, painfully and gratingly; but do not let that warp your judgment as to his view of what should be done. You are very sad at present: I comprehend how little you can think of the future with any pleasure; but the future must come. This gentleman loves you very dearly: he has given evidence of disinterestedness; he is well spoken of by every one; as far as we can calculate human probabilities, you would safely entrust your happiness to him.

“When I was very young,” and here Margaret’s voice grew still lower, sweeter, and clearer, “when I was very young, they wished me to marry Mr. For-dyce, who had then great expectations of inheritance; *I* was poor, though you would scarcely think it, Eleanor, — you have no idea what a poor condition a poor dukedom is, with its pomp and stateliness, and feudal memories. My only brother was abroad, finishing his education; my father and mother dead; my good old grandmother living in the gaunt grey castle at Lanark’s Lodge, like one of the benevolent fairies in old magic tales. We saw very few people; yet even among these few, I had my girlish preference.”

Margaret suddenly stopped, and the tears rose to her eyes; then she ended more hurriedly, and very earnestly:

“I do assure you, my dearest Eleanor, that I was



so perfectly happy with Mr. Fordyce, I loved him so entirely, that I have sometimes doubted whether any other lot could have satisfied my heart as well. My married life was one of unbroken sunshine: I would not have changed my noble-hearted husband for any other human being. I have smiled when people have spoken of the disparity of our ages, of our change of prospects when an unexpected marriage sent his inheritance to a different branch of the Fordyce family. I did not ask if others were younger, richer, or handsomer — I loved *him*; and I was proud of his loving me. I say this to you,” continued she more calmly, after a pause of some moments, “lest you should think it impossible — as many girls do — to make a happy marriage without being in love. My marriage was a happy one, Eleanor.”

But Eleanor only sighed heavily.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to come to some decision: it was necessary to answer Sir Stephen's letter. Eleanor sent for Godfrey the next day, and told him she consented.

“But warn Sir Stephen Penrhyn,” said she after a few hurried sentences of explanation, “as he hopes to marry me — as he expects me to prefer this marriage for my mother's sake, never to mention my guardian —”

“Your *guardian*!” said Godfrey, with withering contempt.



“Never to mention Mr. Stuart,” repeated Eleanor with pale lips, but haughty firmness, “at all to me: least of all in the terms used in his letter. Abuse of the dead cannot serve my mother, and it is a needless addition to my pain.”

Godfrey sate down to write at once. He wrote angrily and rapidly; he said precisely what Eleanor bid him; and he pushed the sheet of paper across the table, as if sullenly submitting it for her approval. But one of those chance associations of which Byron speaks as —

“Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound,”

smote Eleanor’s heart.

The sound of Godfrey’s pen hurriedly passing over the paper, reminded her of the fever through which David Stuart had nursed her when a child: when she heard him writing — conscious, but too weak to do more than lie listening.

All returned: — the pale anxious face; the heavy, tender eyes, that had watched so many nights for her sake; the sound of his voice in prayer; the cherishing touch of his hand, enfolding hers while he prayed; all the daily, hourly, habitual tenderness of that poor wretch who had rushed uncalled to meet his God; who was dead, disgraced; he whose face she might never see again, in that blank, sick world where others were wooing her; and suddenly overwhelmed her.



She rose, as Godfrey put the letter before her; she tossed her clasped hands above her head with a despairing wail; and dropping down again in her chair, she sobbed as though her heart would break.

Godfrey looked at her with more than usual displeasure.

“Don’t be so like an actress, for Heaven’s sake!” said he.

This was a favourite phrase with Godfrey; as it is with many persons of impassive manners. It never seems to strike them that the actress copies nature — nature, it may be, in her exaggerated moments, but nature still. The stride of the savage, the gesticulation of the Frenchman, are foreign to us, but natural to them. I have heard and smiled at the observation, “What a beautiful moonlight! it is like a scene on the stage!” Was the moonlight less real for the comparison?

But these were reflections Godfrey never made. He knew that he could submit to be shot, hung at the yard-arm, or follow the funeral of his wife and children, without the moving of a muscle, or the quivering of an eyelash. That being *his* manner of enduring grief or pain, it appeared to him the model manner. He could not conceive of, or admit any other. All his lines of admiration and esteem, centred in the perspective point of self.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

## Eleanor's Bridegroom.

SIR STEPHEN PENRHYN'S arrival at Aspendale, as Miss Raymond's accepted suitor, brought a certain degree of cheerfulness to all but the object of his suit. Lady Raymond saw him with curiosity, and a sort of complacent triumph. Her pretty daughter's conquest! her son-in-law that was to be! She also admired him; as she admired Godfrey; and wondered Eleanor was not prouder of him, for many were Sir Stephen's stories of bets won by marvellous feats of swimming, such as none ever performed but Byron and Leander; of pistol-shots at a shilling held between his finger and thumb; of steeple-chases, and leaps, that made the listener gape with wonder both at the horse and his rider, and sometimes secretly question the exactitude of the anecdotes told.

Godfrey received him with more cordiality than he had yet shown to any acquaintance; they talked together of David Stuart's unprincipled and dastardly conduct. Lady Margaret had always been kind to Eleanor's admirer; and some of the old smiles came back, while she welcomed and congratulated him.

At first, there was some disposition, on the parts of all, to soothe him by excuses for Eleanor's utter dejection and shyness; to reason with him on the allowance to be made for her, seeing the great horror that had



occurred, and that she had been brought up from childhood by the man who had destroyed himself. They were all afraid Sir Stephen's feelings might be wounded; but they might have spared themselves the anxiety.

Perhaps no better explanation can be given of the nature of Sir Stephen's attachment, than the fact, that it was a secondary consideration with him whether Eleanor seemed "in love," or not, so long as she accepted him. Let the marriage take place; that was the boundary of his requisition. If Stuart had died on the gallows — if he had died on the rack — what was that to Sir Stephen? The event, as he truly said, made no change in his sentiments. Her fortune was gone: very well; his was not; he had still eighteen thousand a-year and his prospects. Give her to him. Don't make circumstances seem obstacles that were in fact facilities. Give him this beggared beauty: he wanted her, not her fortune. Give her to him, there, now; under what conditions they pleased; settlements, or no settlements; debts, or no debts; love, or no love. Of course, he would be glad to inspire her with affection, if he could; but if not, still let her be his — his, dressed like other brides, in smiles and blushes, or choked in sobs and mourning: — His at all hazards! His passion for her was as a bird of prey, swooping down to seize her in its talons. Hope, tenderness, courtship, delay, were as little present in his thoughts,



as in the hawk that sweeps its circle and drops through the air. Life was a restless fever, till the preparations for his marriage were completed; all signed and settled; the journey to Edinburgh made; the wedding over; and that pale wonder of the world his by every law human and divine; his, so that he would have the right to smite and slay any man who attempted to wrench her from him.

There are women who think it sublime to be loved with this sort of passion; who are proud of inspiring it. The sublime of sensuality! It is a love, which when the sum is cast up and the loss and gain balanced, can be effaced as easily as the figures on a child's slate. It is a love which retains no memory of the past, and gives no hold over the future. Many a poor village girl has lived to learn its worth; and marvelled in the simple-heartedness of her despair, how it was that tears and prayers failed to move one who seemed so ready to lay down life for her smile; how it was that the same man who was well nigh shooting himself for her sake, could almost see her drown herself with indifference. "He loved me once — how can he be so hard with me now?" Poor little sorrowful fool, he never loved you; he loved himself. Love is pitiful, and prone to sacrifice. Look back, and see who made those sacrifices. You did. Now, dig for pity in that sterile heart, and find the soil, — hot sand!



Meanwhile, Sir Stephen did his best, after his own method, to please and conciliate every one round him. He showered gifts on Emma's little children; he would have bestowed toys of solid gold, if they had desired them. He ordered all Lady Raymond's Indian shawls, trinkets, knick-nacks, and treasures, to be bought in at the sale at any price they were bid up to. The servants thought they had never seen such a generous-hearted gentleman in their lives. All the morning he went about with the lady's-maid, making lists of things which the woman knew or imagined her mistress would be loth to lose; and all the evening he sate and contemplated Eleanor — Eleanor dressed in the pretty, gay, light colours Margaret had chosen for her season in town. For the death of the man she loved, his dreadful death, did not give her any right to wear mourning. He was no relation. That poor sinner, of whom no one spoke, now that the first burst of inquiry, execration and blame was over, was nothing to those he had loved, and served, and ruined — nothing to Eleanor!

And so she sate, in her bright shot-silks, working at the gay curtain border of crimson and white roses, which she had worked at all the summer; looking up with vague, frightened eyes at Sir Stephen when he spoke; trying to collect the sense of what he said, in her wandering brain; trying to like him, and feel grateful to him, because he would not allow her



mother's things to be disturbed or sold; and because he was to be her husband, and it was shocking to feel the horror of him that she did, from the terrible associations connected with his letter of proposals. Poor Eleanor! she strove hard; and Margaret's tender smile, from time to time silently encouraged her, in her attempts to converse with the man whose presence was to replace for life that dear vision of a perpetuated companionship, lost to her for ever!

Once only, in the petty every-day incidents that are all so marked in the first hour of affliction, all courage and self-command forsook her. Sir Stephen proposed that she should take a ride with him. It would do her good to ride. Margaret looked out at the calm autumn day, and thought so too. Eleanor came down equipped to the portico, where Sir Stephen was already waiting for her. The groom was leading the horses up and down before the door. Eleanor stood still, and shuddered. David Stuart's horse and her own were there. Nothing could be more natural: the riding-horses being ordered, the ordinary mechanical routine of service was performed: little the whistling groom cared who rode the sleek animal committed to his charge: he adjusted the stirrups and reins.

"Shall I assist you?" said Sir Stephen.

"Thank you; the groom;" said Eleanor faintly.

Still she stood, breathing heavily, and looking



around. There was Margaret, waiting to see them mount, as formerly; her sweet face paler than Eleanor had yet seen it, but with a smile — a loving, pitying smile. There were the horses; *his* horse, that was fed from Margaret's basket of roses on that day marked out from other usual days only by a secret remembrance. But where was he?

David Stuart was dead; drowned in the Roaring Linn. He would ride no more with Eleanor; nor walk, nor read, nor speak, nor smile; the cold autumn wind blew over the restless waterfall, whose murmur seemed to sound in her ear; the histful pleading glance of his eyes rose to her memory; sunshine, and trees, and paths, and hills, where they had rode together, pressed confusedly on her brain; the marble pillars of the portico, against which Margaret leaned with golden-braided hair, flickered with strange shadows, and reeled and shook unsteadily in her sight.

"Oh! I cannot — I cannot," muttered the poor girl; and in attempting to move back to that gentle friend, she lost consciousness, and sank fainting in Sir Stephen's arms.

In his arms! that shy stately queen of his fancy, who was distant to him as a picture or a dream. A fierce fear thrilled his heart that he yet might lose her; that death might rob him of his promised bride; and as he strained her convulsively to his breast, he himself turned ghastly pale.



"She is not recovered enough to ride yet; she has been so unwell lately," said Lady Margaret. "Let me take off her hat and veil; let me attend to her; you will stifle her," added she, with an amazed impatient effort to release Eleanor.

But she moved him no more than if it had been a statue of force holding a broken lily. Still he held her; fast; till a gasping sigh told of returning life, and the mournful eyes re-opened and fixed themselves on his face.

The accidents of physical preference and physical disgust are beyond our ken, and depend perhaps more than we are ourselves aware, on slight threads of association woven in the web of memory.

When Eleanor recovered consciousness, the grasp that held her was the first idea that presented itself. Inexplicably, the day recurred when first she saw Sir Stephen, the dreadful strength of his arm, lashing poor Ruellach. Inexplicably also, the gentle touch of David Stuart's hand, assisting her to dismount, or arranging the reins in her first riding lessons. She felt, she knew not why, a sort of horror of that strength of which Sir Stephen was so proud. There was something terrible and repulsive to her in the savage fondness of his locked embrace — in the wild eagerness of his anxious eyes. It was with a sick shudder that she turned from him, and placed her hand in Margaret's.



"I have been so ill; I do not feel equal to riding," was all she said; and for a moment, the bride and bridegroom, so strangely betrothed, looked wistfully at each other. Then Eleanor's glance dropped. The horses were being led back to the stable, and her gaze sadly followed them. They were to be sold in a few days; so much the better. Let everything be swept away that bore traces of the past.

She was glad that her marriage was to take place in Edinburgh, and not at Aspendale: not in that quiet village church, where her dream had been to stand as the wedded wife of David Stuart, and hear the marriage blessing from the lips of her earliest and dearest friend, old Mr. Fordyce. She was glad that all was to be so strange and new round her, that it would seem rather as if she were transported into another more dreary world, than continuing her struggle in this. Only Ruellach, and Stuart's servant Sandy, remained as links to the old happy times. The latter had pleaded hard to be allowed to remain in the service of the family. He had been with Sir John many years, and had followed David to England. Old, quaint, and nearly useless as he seemed, Sir Stephen showed considerable reluctance in granting the petition in his favour, even when urged by Eleanor.

"He thought, perhaps, you would let him keep one of the lodges; he knows the place," said she.

"What lodge? Who has been talking of the place?"



Who has been talking of the lodge?" said Sir Stephen; with a glance of such sudden anger at the man, as startled and astonished Eleanor.

"Deed, then, Sir Stephen, I'm frae the Duke o' Lanark's pairt o' the country — ye ken that's no far off; but if I'll no hae the lodge, put me whar ye wull. I'd like weel eneugh to be under-gairdener. I'm rare at sortin' seeds, and makin' cane-work for ladies' bowers — her Laddyship kens I did muckle o' that in India; and I'm rare at makin' flies for fushing; there's no a fush in the lake but I'll find a fly for him. I'm gude at a hunder things. Just tak me as odd han' and try me. I'm thinkin' ye'll find me of mair use than ye'd weel believe."

"You are to take him as *odd man*, Sir Stephen," said Eleanor, with the nearest approach to a smile Sir Stephen had yet seen on her sad face. He looked at her upward-pleading eyes, and longed to speak familiarly and gaily to her, as a bridegroom might; to say, "Well, thank me, and kiss me, and have it your own way." But to speak familiarly to Eleanor, was what Sir Stephen had yet to learn; and he therefore awkwardly conceded, after a moment's hesitation, the favour she asked, and dismissed Sandy to his duties.

"Thank you very much," said Eleanor; and she held out her hand to him. He seized her hand eagerly; the passionate wish again beat in his heart, but as he looked on her pale cold cheek, fear again checked him.



He leaned against the window where they were standing, and counted the days that would intervene before she was his wedded wife.

They past, those days — swiftly they past, to all but him. To the busy restless servants, who had more to do than twice that number of days seemed sufficient to enable them to accomplish; to Lady Raymond, who dreaded leaving the home she had inhabited before she was a widow; to poor Emma, who felt more frightened and forsaken every hour, as she contemplated the approach of the week she was to spend without her husband, alone with her paralytic and speechless father, who seemed scarcely conscious of Eleanor's weeping farewell.

Godfrey was to accompany them as far as Edinburgh, and give his half-sister away. Lady Margaret, too, would go with them; and the Duke and Duchess of Lanark were to be present at the wedding, their little girls and Euphemia to be bridesmaids. It was the only compliment in their power on this occasion, and Sir Stephen was proud and gratified, and expected that it would be extremely gratifying also to his sister.

But he over-rated the placability of that remarkable lady. Outraged as she had originally been, on behalf of the whole body of noble Scotch women, at her brother's choice of an English girl, a mere nobody; "whose father was just a general, and her mother the Lord knows who;" there was yet the redeeming



circumstance that the bride elect had a very large fortune. A sullen welcome had dawned with that thought, and had been intended for the unwitting Eleanor.

But when the fact was made known of Miss Raymond's being literally and positively a beggar, the very clothes for her *trousseau*, (if she had one), paid for by the inveigled and deluded Sir Stephen; Lady Macfarren's wrath knew no bounds. She wrote a few scornful taunting lines at the last moment, saying that she presumed it would not be an over-gay wedding, after the "cheatery" that had been practised, and "the death of that sinful creature, Mr. Stuart;" that she doubted not both mother and daughter knew well enough the situation of affairs, long before that just catastrophe, and had cunningly drawn Sir Stephen on, till he could not retract; that the Earl of Peebles, their cousin, being then laid up in her house with an attack of gout, and other friends staying with her who she thought it would be most especially awkward either to leave or to bring to the wedding, she had relinquished all intention of honouring the ceremony with her presence, and thought that the less that was said or done about it, in the eye of the Edinburgh folk, and the sooner her brother and his bride came away to Glen-carrick, the better; for that they "could not conceal from themselves that it was altogether a shameful and contrairy business."



Sir Stephen reddened as he refolded this gracious epistle, and almost for the first time in his life, felt utter rebellion rise in his heart against the tyrannical government over his mind exercised by his portentous sister.

An excuse from the Earl of Peebles, in a style as kindly as the handwriting was crabbed, somewhat restored his composure. It was accompanied by a beautiful pearl necklace for the bride, and a jocose assurance that he sent it before he saw her, lest it should be supposed he intended any gallantry afterwards; as he expected to find her very pretty, and his gout was not in his eyes, which were always open to the charms of the fair.

Still, Sir Stephen felt comparatively little, the defection of the two principal members of his own family, and the attempt (not altogether unsuccessful) on his sister's part, to make him feel as though his marriage were a disgraceful one. He was too much "in ove" to care. All things faded now into insignificance, that could neither advance nor retard his marriage.

Lady Macfarren would have been perfectly astounded at the carelessness with which her letter was thrust away, and the indifference felt to the absence even of the Earl of Peebles, when Lady Margaret came in to discuss with Sir Stephen the arrangements for the morrow.

Far it was "the morrow" now: one day's light to



die away, and the sun to rise again, and Eleanor Raymond was Eleanor Penrhyn. Before that morrow's sun went down they would be man and wife — man and wife!

The last evening waned slowly away; Margaret spoke but little; her eyes rested fondly and frequently on Eleanor, and filled now and then with furtive tears. The Duchess of Lanark talked much of her own bridal days, and bridal dress; and her extreme youth and *naïveté* at that time, and of the jealousy her little dog had shown of the Duke; how, for many days, it always came whining to her dressing-room door, and could not understand that any one else should be there, but barked and flew at her husband. Such a wise little thing it was — a Scotch terrier; Scotch terriers were always more attached than other dogs, and cleverer — much cleverer. And while she prattled on, making little running commentaries on past nothings, Eleanor sate as in a trance, as one neither fearing nor hoping, but locked in a lethargic dream. Only when they all rose to say good night, and Lady Raymond observed that she “looked pale and tired, though it was quite early,” she glanced wildly round, with a terrified bewildered air, as though some one were missing, or some shadowy spectre had flitted past, — and shrank trembling to her mother's side.

So the day came: and the hour. The solemn vow was spoken; the golden ring circled her finger; the



embrace of mother, brother, and friends, congratulated the bride; the carriages drew up that were to convey Lady Raymond and her maid, and "the happy pair" to Glencarrick; and as Eleanor leaned back, too faint to do more than set her foot on the carriage step; she felt her husband's arm, supporting — almost lifting her in — eager and strong, as on the day he lashed Ruellach!

## CHAPTER XX.

### A Bridal Visit.

THEY did not immediately go to Castle Penrhyn: Glencarrick was nearer: better shooting was to be had there, and from boyhood Sir Stephen had been accustomed to spend a couple of months at this time of the year with his sister. They were expected; and to Glencarrick they went.

It was late when they arrived, and the chill gloom of the autumn evening was suddenly exchanged for the warmth and light of a wood fire, by whose flickering upward blaze Eleanor beheld with dazzled eyes, a very very tall bony woman standing on the rug, speaking rather loudly and jestingly with a little gouty smiling old man, ensconced in an old-fashioned arm-chair, that looked like a carved throne. The room, which was large and lofty, had a pleasant smell of pine-wood, the walls being of that material; it



looked cheerful and handsome by the flickering light, and at even distances the antlers of some king of the forest were nailed up as trophies of successful sport. The tall lady did not move from the spot where she was standing, but she looked towards the door as they entered, and extended both hands as Sir Stephen approached. She did not kiss her brother, but greeted him heartily, as a friendly man might have done, and her arms seemed as strong as his own, or stronger.

When Sir Stephen presented his bride, she stiffened her already erect figure, as if to reduce Eleanor to the proper level of insignificance, and then made a haughty, almost imperceptible inclination of the head. The Earl of Peebles claimed a less ceremonious introduction, and rising from his carved and cushioned throne, kissed her on both cheeks, chuckling as he did so, and assuring her that he had in his time kissed a good many brides, but none that he felt such an interest in, and that if she were a good girl and loved Sir Stephen, he would not endanger her future prospects of becoming Countess of Peebles by marrying and presenting a bride, and a family of his own; though such things had been, when heirs thought themselves most sure of their inheritance. After which, softly patting her hand, he subsided into the carved throne, and looked smilingly at the fire. Lady Penrhyn eyed Eleanor from head to foot.

“Well, you seem tired enough, and pale enough,”



said she gruffly, making a sort of gesture as if motioning her to stand nearer the warm blae.

"I am not much tired," said Eleanor, "and I am always pale."

"Humph! my brother wrote us word that you were a great beauty, that's all. I suppose London hours, and fine lady ways —"

"I have been very little in London."

"Humph! how old are you?"

"I am seventeen."

"You look much older; I should think now you're safely married, you could have no objection to tell your real age."

"I was seventeen last August," said Eleanor, in rather a proud tone, though she struggled with her tears, not at the extraordinary and inhospitable reception granted her, but at the sudden recollection of her birthday, in all the quiet and happiness of Aspendale, before fatal events had broken up that dear home. She sate down, and patted Ruellach's head, as he had stretched himself without ceremony on the rug.

"That's a largish dog for the drawing-room, Leddy Penrhyn."

"It shall not come in, if you dislike it. Is this the drawing-room?"

"Ay, is it. Did you think it was the kitchen?" said Lady Macfarren, with a sneer.

Sir Stephen felt irritated; but habitual submission



to his sister subdued his tone, as he observed, that a highland shooting lodge was so different to what Eleanor had ever seen, that she might stand excused for her question.

"But I think the room quite beautiful," said Eleanor gently; "and I think the smell of the fir-wood the pleasantest thing in the world."

"We'll make a highland lass of you in no time," said the delighted Lord Peebles, reaching out his hand again to pat hers, while her sister-in-law moved away, much like a dog that has been ordered not to spring on a wayfarer.

Lady Raymond, whose carriage had followed at some little distance, was now announced, and Sir Stephen led her forward and presented her by name.

Lady Macfarren's reception was one degree more freezing, if possible, than that bestowed on Eleanor.

Lady Raymond was much fatigued, very delicate, and accustomed to be greatly caressed, and gently dealt with; she therefore nervously responded to the questions put to her by her extraordinary hostess, and burst into tears.

"What's the matter now?" said Lady Macfarren.

"My dearest mother!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"I don't know," sobbed Lady Raymond, "but it's all so strange."

"Humph! well, it can't be stranger to you than it



is to me, that's one comfort: and now we'll all go to our rooms, for it's late."

"I hope," said Sir Stephen to his wife, as he left her to dress for dinner, "that your mother will avoid offending my sister in any way."

The look of unrestrained amazement with which this speech was met, confused and irritated Sir Stephen.

"I mean," said he, impatiently, "that I hope they will get on as well as they can together. My sister, you see, is a woman of very superior mind, and she has always held a most important position in our family; indeed I may say that Lord Peebles himself would hardly do anything without consulting her; and she is rather proud; and my marriage has not altogether, — in fact circumstances, — you see I don't like to vex you by stating all my reasons, but I think we should do better, you know, if you and your mother knocked under a little."

"Knocked under a little!" Eleanor mused upon the words, and looked doubtfully at her husband, as if seeking further information.

"My sister can be kind enough when she chooses," said he, "but she don't choose to be braved."

"Braved!"

"D—n it, she don't like people to be too independent, you know; when — when they can't be independent, you know. If this could all be understood at once, I'm sure we should get on very comfortably;



and if it ain't, I know enough of Janet to know that we shan't, that's all."

"I suppose Lady Macfarren will not be offended without good reason?" said Eleanor, after a pause.

"Well, of course she'll have reasons — reasons of her own, you know; but she's proud, as I told you. Now, I thought your way of answering her about your age, rather — rather short, as if you were offended."

"I was not offended. I was surprised; because she did not seem to believe me, and because such questions are not asked on a first introduction."

"Well, but you know she must judge what questions she'll ask, and she likes to be answered carefully and considerately; in fact, she's always offended if she's not answered in that way."

Especially, thought Eleanor, by people who can't be independent. The phrase and the hesitating tone in which it was spoken, lingered in her heart. She felt all its meaning. Yes, she and her mother were beggars — beggars rescued from beggary by this rich man, because he had fallen in love with Eleanor, and married her. Having married her, ought he not to cherish and protect her, whether his sister liked the marriage or not? Was it all right, and natural, and a matter of course, that he should warn her not to offend, instead of warding off offence from her? Was this husband's love? The long tresses of her hair



were braided by the poor Ayah, in the most complicated and graceful plaits, before Eleanor had resolved this question. She sate before the mirror, but she did not see the reflection of her own sad face; she was trying darkly to see into her future.

"Do you not like it, my Lady?"

"Like what?" said Eleanor.

"The plaiting of your hair." Eleanor kissed the poor Ayah, who had been her nurse when a child, and said with a sigh:

"It is very pretty, but I was thinking of something else."

When the party assembled for dinner, several more introductions took place; none of which seemed to possess any interest; till, at one of the new names, Eleanor positively started.

"Leddy Penrhyn, Mrs. Christison, of Dunleath, and Miss Christison, desire to make acquaintance with ye."

Mrs. Christison, of Dunleath! the widow of the writer who had bought Mr. Stuart's property; the person with whom David had treated for the possession of the home of her ancestors! Eleanor strove to speak, but her words were inarticulate. She looked at the old lady and her daughter. Over the features of the latter, who was a fat bold-looking spinster with a profusion of fair curls and hard keen eyes, flashed a gleam of curiosity so vivid, that it had the effect of



recalling Eleanor to herself. Over the somewhat plaintive countenance of her sober little mother, there stole an equally evident degree of compassion. "Ye 're quite strange here, yet, Leddy Penrhyn," was all the old lady said, but in the tone there was sympathy. Miss Tabitha Christison eyed the young bride rather scornfully. Tabitha (or Tib, as her mother and friends called her), was not fond of young, pretty people; and it was rumoured besides, that she had herself aspired to the position Eleanor occupied as Sir Stephen's wife. Matrimony had never been absent from Tib's thoughts since she was sixteen, and she was now five-and-forty. She shifted her cards, but she played them still; patiently and dauntlessly, whenever there was an opportunity. Not that Tib had been without wooers, for she had been a comely "sonsie lassie," and might be rich, if her mother divided what she had to leave between her and her brother. But those that wooed her she would not marry, and those she desired to marry would not woo. So it came to pass that Tib was an old maid.

Now, of old maids there are many kinds. Cuvier himself could scarcely have classed the multitude of the species. The patient pious old maid; the brisk busy old maid; the gaunt, the precise, the dressy, the grim, the gossiping, the spiteful, the kindly; all these, buzzing in and out of the world's great hive, may puzzle us by their variety. But one great distinction



they share with the rest of their fellow-creatures, married or single: there are bad and good old maids. One species, gentle, meek, useful; having no ties of their own, making ties of the very tenderness and affection of their yearning hearts; nursing sick children; looking after the poor; taking all the trouble off the hands of some overburdened mother of a family; governess, friend, housekeeper, and humble companion, all in one; women perfect in their way; women who lack nothing of being saints, except canonization.

But to balance the love we might otherwise feel for the lonely race, there is another species: busy-bodies; intriguers, thrusting themselves out of their own solitary homes into the homes of others, to work mischief, like earwigs in the core of fruit; toad-eaters; slanderers; full of flattery; full of spite; struggling to keep their ground by the meanest concessions; affecting not to perceive the most open rebuffs; ready to undermine by the grossest treachery; envious; pitiless; daughters of the father of lies, and serving him perpetually.

Tib Christison belonged to the latter class. Many a home had rued her presence; but she had her welcome yet, where she was not found out. She had her welcome at Glencarrick, and well she kept her ground. Lady Macfarren spoke of Tib as a "good, useful body." Tib was never out of sorts, or out of temper with her; though she might be heard rating her poor old mother



in their private room. Tib played Scotch reels for an indefinite length of time, or danced them, according as was needed; Tib had receipts infallible for gout and rheumatism; Tib knew how game could be preserved for the longest possible period; and where the finest Shetland spinning could be done, at the cheapest possible rate. If a multiplicity of tiresome commissions had to be executed, Tib was charged with them when she went to Edinburgh. If a "wearyfu'" guest had to be entertained, Tib was the uncomplaining sacrifice; if more guests came than the house conveniently held, Tib gave up her room for a garret.

Tib appeared, indeed, to be continually practising the most laborious self-denial; but Tib knew what she was about. For the last three years, or more, a visionary coronet floated before her eyes. The service she seemed to give to all, was in truth offered only at the shrine of that kind little Dagon on the carved throne, who had promised Eleanor not to cut out Sir Stephen, by becoming a husband and father. The Earl of Peebles (or as old Mrs. Christison always called him, "the Airle") was Tib's mark. For the sake of a footing in Penrhyn Castle and Glencarrick, Tib bore all insolence and all trouble. For the sake of its neighbourhood to Penrhyn Castle, lone and lovely Dunleath had been still retained, when its owner most desired to part with it. Tib's progress was slow and uncertain, but it was progress. Year after year her



courtship of the little Dagon went silently on. She wooed him with knitted flannels, and caressed him with rheumatic embrocations. He could not do without her. She was wary of landing her fish, but she felt he was hooked. Feebler and less capable of resistance he became day by day, as she wound the strong line of determination round the creel of her will. And all this time Lady Macfarren was blind, (as people very often are on these great occasions) blind, from the very audacity of the scheme concocted under her eyes. The notion of such wild ambition on the part of that good useful body the writer's daughter, as her marrying the Airle, the head of their illustriously obscure house, never once occurred to her.

"Amuse Lord Peebles, Tib; I 'm going out." — "Give your arm to Lord Peebles, for a turn in the garden, Tib; he 's a little lame to-day."

And good useful Tib obeyed with compassionate alacrity.

Nor was Lord Peebles himself clearer the Airle had been an ambassador; but Tib was the shrewder diplomatist of the two.

Eleanor, however, was not as blind as Lady Macfarren. To her amazed eyes it immediately appeared that some odd sort of courtship was going on; a courtship "*à l'envers*," since in this instance the lady was the wooer.

After dinner had been lingered through, and a



somewhat tipsy company of gentlemen assembled, Scotch reels were the order of the night. Apparently the fit of gout that had prevented Lord Peebles from attending Eleanor's marriage, must have been very slight; for, from a spectator, he became an actor in the busy scene. He danced: he cried "Hech!" he snapped his fingers with feeble jauntiness; making roguish faces, now at Eleanor, and now at Tib. Tib neutralised these attempts at familiarity, by demure and majestic glances; but she danced with an activity which perfectly astounded her young sister-in-law, who felt, while her partner set to her and cut the figure of the reel, as though she beheld a very large lamp, with a little white moth flitting round it.

While they were resting from the dance, some remarks were made on the various persons who composed the company; and Lord Peebles, looking at a gaunt red-haired individual in a kilt, who had been very attentive to Tib, said:

"That 's your brother Christison's partner, Mr. Malcolm, Miss Tib; ain 't it? What does he wear the kilt for? I hear he 's one of your suitors, and I am sorry to hear it, for the youth 's just like the ghost of Rob Roy."

"Oh! but you 're a droll man, Lord Peebles; I vow ye make me laugh with thae comparisons. The ghost o' Rob Roy! Deed then it 's a fact, that Nature was ow'r scrimping in makin' him; she hadna stuff



to spare. But I 'm no for a ghost I can tell ye, nor for a penniless writer's son neither, which young Mr. Malcolm is; and I 'm thinking his suit 'ill be ill-suited, if he maks it to me. The ghost o' Rob Roy! did one ever hear the like? I declare I 'll be afraid for ye, if ye 're so sateerical, tho' we 're old friends. The ghost of Rob Roy," eh?

Tib laughed so much, and so heartily, she seemed so entertained, that evidently she contrived to bewilder the Airle into thinking he had said something very amusing. He laughed and rubbed his little hands, and looked with glee at the unconscious Highlander who was the subject of their remarks. But while, for the twentieth time, Tib giggled over Lord Peebles' jest, she suddenly caught Eleanor's eye; its expression displeased her, for in it Tib thought she read contempt and repugnance; and perhaps she was right. And she treasured the memory of that look, for Tib was a great hoarder-up of small slights; being convinced of her own value, and that sooner or later the day would come when she could repay them. Once again, in the course of the evening, the expression of poor Eleanor's face was distasteful to her; Lord Peebles was complimenting his new relation on her beauty.

"My *certie*, (as Mrs. Christison says), if we 'd met when you were single and I was for marrying, I know some young ladies who 'd have been hard run; you 're



a sweet lily blossom, and I envy my cousin Stephen, I can tell you."

Eleanor smiled at the old man, while he chuckled over this speech; her smile had neither mockery or merriment in it, but a sort of calm gentle compassion, and it displeased Tib.

When Tib went to bed that night, she felt that she hated young Lady Penryhn; she thought with vague fierceness of the new-comer; and she twisted her hair into its multifarious curl-papers, with such hard final pinches, that she must have dreamed she had the bride in her fingers. Poor Eleanor! as she murmured the words in her evening prayer, "Deliver us from evil," she little knew that two rooms off, the fat old maid was closing her hard keen eyes, her bitter and irreconcilable foe.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### Hospitality at Glencarlick.

YES, Tib Christison hated Eleanor, undeserved as her hatred might seem. If we were only disliked for the real and voluntary offence we give, what a holiday world this would be!

But some hearts are so full of gall, that they brim over, and the drops fall on their fellow-creatures as they pass. Some dislike from hearsay; some for a chance look or word misinterpreted; some for very



envy of natural advantages, which they neither earned nor can surrender, but carry about with them a stamp set upon them by God: of far less importance, perhaps, in their own eyes, than in the eyes of those who grudge those advantages; for they have tested their value by possession, and know how, in His supreme justice, all such inequalities are balanced. The poor see the rich go by in carriages and think that wealth must be happiness; the rich know that it is not so.

But we will not affirm that Eleanor gave no offence; that of course must depend on what is considered an offence. With Tib, to be young, handsome, and a bride, was to offend. With Lady Macfarren, not "to knock under," as Sir Stephen had elegantly phrased it, was to offend.

Eleanor was very gentle, but she had a sort of calm superiority of manner, intolerable to her bony and stalwart sister-in-law. The latter had expected to rule a shame-stricken, dejected, and trembling beggar; in love with her brother; a mere school-girl in age; frightened and anxious. When she saw the bride, her very soul was disquieted and astonished, by the tranquil dignity of her deportment, and the look of thought in her steady serious eyes; nor was she without a certain feminine instinct that told her at once Eleanor did not love Sir Stephen. It increased the suspicions she had conceived, that the coming



crash of her large fortune was known to the widow and daughters before they accepted him. She saw in them, two subtle schemers, whose plans for worldly rescue from difficulties had amply succeeded. Was it possible to lose so much money, and be so quiet about it, if it had not been a thing foreseen and fore-known?

True, Stuart had drowned himself, to avoid disgrace and exposure; but that proved nothing as regarded Lady Raymond and her daughter. Money! How dare she take so coolly the fact of her having no money, after having passed as a great heiress? How dare she behave in all respects as she would have done if she had married him in the pride and pomp and glory of having five thousand a-year?

And she was not in love with him! If Lady Macfarren loved anything, in her hard cold narrow heart, it was her half-brother. True, she had worked like a mole with her doting old father, to get portions of the unentailed property settled on herself, to the prejudice of Sir Stephen; but that was because she loved money better than all. Next to money, she loved Sir Stephen; better perhaps as the head of the family, the means of reflected consequence, the chief object of importance in her life, than as her brother, but she loved him; and it was with bitter resentment that she thought of his being entrapped and deluded by this pale-faced, Indian-born, delicate-looking girl; slight



and stately as a reed in flower; proud as a queen, and poor as a shepherdess. He who might, in Lady Macfarren's opinion, have been considered a good match for a Duke's daughter, and have been adored into the bargain.

The treament, therefore, of the young bride, by Lady Macfarren and Miss Christison 'partook of those three varieties of conduct which an old-fashioned historian informs us were practised by the fashionable ladies of the Court of Queen Elizabeth in their intercourse with each other; namely, "the privy nip," the "fleering frump," and the "open flout;" all of which methods I have also seen practised by the ladies of the Court of Queen Victoria; the "privy nip" being, I think, most in vogue among young ladies, (who are obliged, in their little animosities, to keep up a semblance of friendship and civility;) the "fleering frump," among young married women jealous of each other; and the "open flout," unquestionably the line of the more magnificent ladies; great Marchionesses, and patronesses of Almack's.

That Eleanor suffered, under this reign of covert hostilities, was not to be doubted; but she did not complain, and showed neither resentment nor resistance. Indeed, she was the most provoking person to offend, in the world, for she never appeared to comprehend that the offence was wilful. Her reserve and her repugnance visibly increased, but she was calm



and polite; she did not behave as though any peculiar aggression against herself were going on, but as if she thought she was living among disagreeable people; and her mode of taking these battering assaults confounded and maddened Lady Macfarren.

It was always some petty annoyance that was practised. Those who know life, know that petty annoyances are sometime more difficult to bear than more important misfortunes, for which we prepare the courage of our souls, and which we have high and holy motives for endeavouring to sustain. Petty was the warfare; petty the suffering; and petty the triumph; the resistance *nil*. Once it was a question whether Lady Raymond should not have a sofa placed in her bed-room. Mrs. Christison of Dunleath had the good-nature to observe, and the hardihood to mention this desideratum, having found Lady Raymond climbing up to rest on the huge damask-curtained bed in the middle of the day.

“A sofa! What would she want with a sofa?” exclaimed Lady Macfarren. “If folks are well, let them sit up; and if they’re sick, let them undress, go to bed, and send for the doctor: that’s *my* maxim. Rare fine-lady doings! if every woman in the house were to be crouched up in her bed-room on a sofa, like a hare in its form. Is anything the matter? If there is, send for Dr. McNab. If there ain’t, don’t talk nonsense about sofas. There’s one in the draw-



ing-room, and she's welcome to lie there, if she likes."

On another occasion, a prodigious altercation (or rather monologue, since the loud angry voice of Lady Macfarren was only responded to by a chorus of low sobs) took place in the corridor of an upper story where the servants slept, which the hostess was visiting on a police inspection to see that all was right. The Ayah was crouched on the ground, weeping and terrified. Lady Macfarren was pointing sternly to the place where she sat. She said she "would not have it — would not allow it."

"Out with all those pots and pans! I never saw such heathen nonsense in all my life! If the creature can't eat plain wholesome food like the rest of the servants, she's welcome to starve, for me, till she's learned better. Take them away — take them all away — and let me hear no more of it."

Then Eleanor comprehended the cause of the tumult: the Ayah was a Hindoo, and as one of the tenets of their religion is not to eat in vessels that have been used by those who profess a different faith, she had always cooked her little rice messes in the "pots and pans" now so unceremoniously carried off. Eleanor looked compassionately down on her nurse.

"Never mind; I will buy you others, Maya; you shall have new ones," said she.



Fierce and scornful was the laugh, with which Lady Macfarren greeted this interference.

"You'll buy others? Truly, Lady Penrhyn, you're over young for the management of other people's households. You'll buy others — and pay for them out of *that*, I suppose," and she pointed to the necklace of gold coins which the Hindoo woman wore.

Eleanor did not answer; no one could have guessed if she heard the taunt; she still bent over her nurse, and spoke to her; using Indian terms of endearment she had learned as a child; and when the little Hindoo rose and went back to her room, she went with her, passing through the group of servants and mistress and Tib, as though instead of living people they had been the boughs of trees in a storm.

To *humble* Eleanor, was Lady Macfarren's constant endeavour, and Eleanor could not be humbled. She was not afraid of loud words; she was not ashamed of her poverty; she would not understand the meaning of half the taunts that were addressed to her. But one weak point became apparent. The sudden glance at Lady Raymond, when some coarser sneer than usual seemed to include *her* in the systematic warfare, showed that any insult or tormenting speech which might wound her mother, was dreaded by Eleanor. She was, to repeat the elegant expression triumphantly used by Tib, in discussing this matter with Lady Macfarren, "as thin-skinned as a rabbit," when Lady Raymond was a



sufferer; and though Lady Raymond had often comforted herself as to the impossibility of some of the gross speeches being intentional, and innocently observed that "the worst of living among vulgar people, was that they had no tact, and were always saying just the wrong things," — yet there were occasions when it was impossible to doubt the design to insult. Once indeed, Lady Raymond, who was a person of weak nerves, and little self-command, was so stung by what was said, that she burst in tears, and exclaimed to her daughter, "I wonder you will allow them to speak to me in that way" — and it was with a thrill of mingled exultation and embarrassment, that the gaunt sister-in-law met Eleanor's indignant reproach:

"What have we ever done to you, that you should behave as you do, Lady Macfarren?"

She had touched her at last; she had found the way to wound; that was satisfactory, and the power was not sparingly used.

What had she done? Ay, what? It is a question many a bride might ask, and many a family find difficult to answer: all for want of a little of that mutual indulgence which Lady Margaret Fordyce preached and practised.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

Life under a new aspect.

SIR STEPHEN was angry that things did not "go smoothly," as he expressed it; but he was not grieved; and he was extremely disposed to repent having brought Lady Raymond with her daughter, and not having dispatched her, at once, with Sandy, "the odd man," to Penrhyn Castle. Eleanor most ardently desired to leave Glencarrick; but how say to her husband, "Your sister is so disagreeable that I hope you will soon go away?"

At length an opportunity offered of ascertaining what chance there was of such a desirable event. Lady Macfarren (aided and abetted by Tib) had made divers allusions to the increased expenditure of the household during the shooting season, and had freely discussed the cheating of her servants, the trouble of her accounts, and the enormous consumption in her house of lights and fuel, before Eleanor. The unquestioning silence of the young bride would have made it difficult to proceed farther, but for Tib's ingenuity. Tib was what is called "very blunt" in manner; she had such a reputation for "speaking her mind," that no one asked if a portion of her thoughts remained unspoken, or were precisely the reverse of what she spoke. It is a very common social illusion, that persons who have the ill-natured courage to say disagreeable things, full of pain and offence, are franker<sup>r</sup> than their neighbours;



that they are frank because they are blunt. Tib was a proof of the exact contrary; for Tib was very blunt, and Tib was very sly. So Tib, knowing exactly what it was that Lady Macfarren desired to communicate, said with a little snorting laugh, in a blunt off-hand manner:

“I’d wager ye, now, Leddy Penrhyn, that ye know so little o’ housekeepin’ that ye’d not even be able to tell what addition each indiveedual maks in a faimily.”

“In what way?”

“In the week’s bills. Dear me, but ye answer varry innocently!”

“I should not have supposed one person, more or less, made much difference; but I don’t know.”

“Weel, it’s just charmin’ to hear your notions, Leddy Penrhyn; but I’m thinking Leddy Macfarren could tell ye a different story. We were lookin’ at the bills this mornin’, and I obsairved that it was a wonder to me that Leddy Raymond had not thought of some little arrangement for herself, by way of help, ye know.”

Eleanor looked at Lady Macfarren. Lady Macfarren coloured, and tossed her head; but she answered quickly:

“Miss Christison means, that Lady Raymond might cast her contribution into the common purse.”

“I thought —” said Eleanor; but the words “I thought we were here on a visit,” choked her, and she paused.



“I know what you thought, but you’re quite mistaken. My brother always paid his scot and lot when he came, and we’d our own agreement about it. At first, after my father died, and the place was mine, I thought just to make the exchange, and let him stay here three months, and I’d stay three months at Penrhyn Castle — though that would not have brought things even, for it’s cheaper far to feed a woman than it is to feed a man, with wine, and all that — but in the end we thought best to set a fair price; so much a month; so much as a bachelor; so much for a married couple; and tho’ indeed I never expected a penniless bride, still less did I expect —”

Here, even Lady Macfarren paused, and the task devolved on Tib of completing the agreeable intimation that she had not expected a third party to arrive, to whom these pecuniary arrangements were utterly unknown, as they appeared to be to Lady Raymond.

“I am sure my mother will be very glad,” said Eleanor, “to contribute her share; we were not aware — Sir Stephen never mentioned to me — I am so ignorant in these matters.”

“Of course we look to him as regards yourself, Leddy Penrhyn, but not as regards yere mother, ye comprehend.”

She comprehended. Oh! rough life of dependence, unrolling like a withered scroll! These people, these



rich people, were bargaining then, among themselves, for the petty courtesies of life done by their inferiors every day with an ungrudging hospitality. Their guests were to pay for the bread they broke.

Eleanor resolved to ask her husband how long they were to stay at Glencarrick. She resolved more: she resolved to ask him to leave Glencarrick.

Her own home; she had not seen it; but she had a home; she had married for that; for the power and the happiness of preventing her mother from ever feeling the bitter change of circumstances caused by her guardian's fault. She had bartered herself, the whole future of her life, for the shelter of that home — where was it? she would go there; she would take her mother there; to-morrow, if it might be so, if it could be so, she would go to Castle Penrhyn.

If it could be so; but it could not. Sir Stephen listened, with gloomy irritation, to his young wife's pleading. He replied that he always had stayed from two to three months at Glencarrick in the shooting season, and he had no notion of shortening his visit for any squabbling among the women. He had warned Eleanor to be very submissive to his sister, and if Lady Macfarren was offended or displeased, Eleanor and her mother must apologize. As to Lady Raymond being called upon to pay a certain portion of the housekeeping, he had not thought about it, but he was quite willing to pay her share, if Eleanor wished



it; though he had understood from Lieutenant Marsden, that she had a sufficient independence from the legacy of Sir John Raymond which Godfrey had restored by deed. At all events, they must stay at Glencarrick the usual time, and make the best of it. He hoped he should hear no more of any disputes or misunderstandings; and he was sorry to say his sister had already complained to him of the way in which Eleanor answered her. She thought Eleanor haughty: Eleanor must not be haughty. There would be no peace in families if those who ought to knock under, wanted to be uppermost; and he would not encourage it, or he would have to settle disputes all day long. He was sure Godfrey would have advised quite a different line from what Eleanor was pursuing; and, with a smothered oath, Sir Stephen left the room.

It was Eleanor's dressing-room; she rose, and opened the window, and looked out over the blue lake, and purple hills with a feverish shudder; wistfully — wildly — as though liberty lay somewhere beyond the boundary of earth. The day was warm and still; it had that aromatic scent which loads the atmosphere in spots thickly planted with firs; such as embalms the air to the traveller who has come through the wild pass of Glencoe, and rests among the ancient firs of the Black Mount. Her eye wandered over the scenes that were present; and her heart wandered through the scenes of the past. This, then, was Da-



vid Stuart's country; the land he loved; the land she had so thirsted to see for his sake; the land already familiar to her from many a sketch drawn by his hand. Oh! better to have died, than live to see it under such circumstances. Better to have died on his heart, when its loud beating choked her voice to silence, than live as the bride of another. Sir Stephen! how he coveted to marry her! How little he loved her! And her poor, gentle-hearted mother, who had never consciously said a word to pain living soul, how cruel not to protect her from harshness and insult! The young bride's eyes filled with angry tears, and her cheek flushed, and she leaned out of the casement, and gazed "over the hills, and far away."

There is a picture by Van Holst at Lansdowne House, which resembled Eleanor in that hour. In that picture (which represents Ginevra in Leigh Hunt's story, after her marriage, and while resolving on suicide), the artist has given a most marvellous delineation of woman's scorn, and woman's misery, mingled with something of the wild anxiety of a creature caught in a trap, in whom there lingers the dim instinct of a possible escape.

Old Mrs. Christison happened to be walking on the lawn; she looked up and saw that young, pale, wrathful, despairing face; and watched it for some moments with silent surprise. Mrs. Christison was a kindly woman, and she climbed the fir staircase, and came puffing into Eleanor's room.



“My dear,” said she, as Eleanor turned her startled head, like a fawn caught in a brake, “I spied ye from below; and I thocht I’d come up, and hae a word or two with ye. Folk here, is camseery folk, na doot; but the Deil himsel’, they say, is nae sae bad as he’s painted; and though Leddy Macfarren’s a queer hard body, she’s nae that ill to bide wi’.”

Eleanor sighed.

She felt so lone that even Mrs. Christison’s sympathy touched her; and she answered gently:

“I was thinking of my mother, Mrs. Christison, and that may have made me look grave.”

“’Deed then Leddy Penrhyn, its varry creditable to ye, anyhow, to be thinkin’ of yere mother” (Tib rarely thought of her); “and it’s just the thocht I’ve got in my mind, for I’ve been haeing a crack wi’ Sandy and yon heathen Indian woman, and they’ve let me into Leddy Raymond’s ways a little; and I’ll do what I can to make her a wee bit mair comfortable. And ye’ll no mak’ a stranger o’ *me*, for I’m just wae for ye to my heart’s core; and wow, but ye’re story’s a sad one! I knew a’ thae Stuarts, and Mrs. Stuart was just a paragon o’ women. My heart was lang sair for her, puir body! I’d walk away up from the hoose at Dunleath to the kirkyard, and look at her grave, and walk back again, wi’ as little pleasure in the possession as might be. And a’ they fine young creatures, her sons and daughters, to die off as they did! Ah! my



dear, she'd a face as fair as an angel, and as muckle dignity as a crowned queen, and her brood were a' like her. "And to my mind the bonniest o' them a' was just Davie; he had na his compare, puir laddie. And I mind weel his coming and pu'ing the weeds frae the place whar his mother used to sit in the sun, and I felt like a thief to hae Dunleath at a', and daredna come forrit (for he didna ken that I was there), but just went and grat within, and watchit him frae the window, till my gudeman cam' and flyt on me, for an auld fule. But ye're young Leddy Penrhyn, and life's a wheel; and it'll maybe gie a good turn yet. The Lord kens what's best for us. Keep a gude heart, and a strong trust in His mercy; and I'll do any little matter I can for Leddy Raymond, in the way o' comfortin', ye ken."

What Mrs. Christison did, or could do, would not have consoled Eleanor much; her "comfortin'," consisting principally in bringing hot scones, delicate preserves, and fresh eggs, to Lady Raymond's room, and pressing her to eat these dainties long after the intolerably early breakfast hour had passed by; putting a little stool of Berlin worsted-work under the feeble feet of the invalid; and heaping fir-cones on the peat fire. But Lady Raymond was not like Eleanor, and she was so soothed by Mrs. Christison's gossiping and attentions, that when she heard the redoutable Tib and her mother were going away, she actually la-



mented, saying that "in Mrs. Christison she lost the one person that made the place tolerable, and that she hoped they would come over from Dunleath to the Castle, and that she and Eleanor would go and see them at Dunleath." To all which Eleanor consented, with a sort of surprised sadness. "The Airle" was invited, as a matter of course; and joked Eleanor by telling her he expected she would make his gruel, and warm his slippers. Lady Margaret was to come, when the Lanarks could spare her, and Godfrey and Emma, as soon as their first mourning was over: for Mr. Fordyce was dead — he had never rallied enough from the stroke of paralysis to speak coherently, and gradually sank till life departed.

It was an obscure life, passed in an obscure village; but not the less full of good deeds. The poor wept their gentle-hearted pastor; and Eleanor, as she lamented her early friend, thought of the last day she saw him — the last indulgent wavering smile, when of all that he muttered and murmured, she could only make out that he spoke tenderly of her guilty guardian, as "poor David Stuart!"

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

Eleanor's new home.

THE radiant autumn sun shone fair and glorious, the day Eleanor left Glencarrick for Castle Penrhyn. The lake lay like a sapphire, dropped from the crown of some "Monarch of Mountains." The silver birch, the scarlet-berried rowan tree, the stately pine, grouped in friendly neighbourhood with the changing foliage of the beech — passed like a dream of beauty before the eyes of the travellers. The bloom of the heather, spread out for miles and miles — the rush of the tumbling turbid stream, whose banks were blocks of stone, whose shining pools seemed fathomless — trickling burn that went down the hill-side singing to itself like a child at play — the difficult, toilsome, rough ascent, bringing at the summit a new world of hills and glens, to be passed through and succeeded by what seemed another world still — this moving panorama went on all day. At length the rich light began to fade; the crimson and purple hills dulled to the colour of cold iron; and the soft moon rose gently up, a little before the sunset glory was gone, as if waiting to comfort the earth when it should be utterly forsaken!

Eleanor had been almost joyous that day. The sense of deliverance from petty torment; the power of protection for her mother which the possession of a



home of her own seemed to promise; the beauty of the scenery; the freshness of the mountain air; all combined to produce a feeling of exhilaration to which her heart had been lately a stranger. She talked and smiled, as Sir Stephen would have given worlds to see her talk and smile a short time since; but now he was gloomy and pre-occupied; his sister had mingled with her farewell, whatever gall she could; words of doubt, bitterness, and warning, rang in his ear; and Eleanor's cheerfulness ran counter to his thought. Something of triumph and tyranny seemed to lurk in it: something of the spirit Lady Macfarren had affected to perceive in Eleanor's eyes that morning, of gladness to set out, as thinking that now the game was all her own. A dim belief in his sister's sneering assurances that he would find he had been "taken in;" that the widow and her daughter knew well enough the crash that was coming, before he proposed; rose and flickered in his mind like a meteor in a swamp, and he watched that lovely smile with dissatisfaction.

For she was his, now; his wife; and the man with passions and no affections, was already able to consider his choice more calmly. Beautiful he thought her, as a picture or a statue; and he thought of her with as much romance as the purchaser of such luxuries might do. Had he paid too dearly for the purchase? Had he been cheated?

Other thoughts, other anxieties, in which Eleanor



had no share, which had their origin before he knew her, likewise perplexed him; and he was silent and moody, answering her questions shortly, and often leaning back and shutting his eyes as if in sleep. But as they neared Castle Penrhyn the lethargic mood forsook him; he became restless, put the window down and looked out, and sighed often and impatiently.

"Are you bored with the length of the journey?" said the young wife; "it has been so beautiful!"

"Well, it may be so, for those who like travelling: I don't: I desire always to be on foot, instead of cooped up in the carriage;" and he again looked impatiently out.

"Do you love the place much?"

"What place? What do you mean?"

"Penrhyn Castle: are you very, very fond of it?"

Sir Stephen answered crossly. He said he thought it ridiculous to talk of loving a place; that one loved people, not things; that as to the castle, it was well enough, though not as fine as Lanark's Lodge, and he had many improvements still to make; that he did not know but he preferred the place in Wales, and that he was sorry not to have had Glencarrick, as the shooting was better there. She would soon judge for herself.

When he had said this, he became grave and silent: so did Eleanor; she wondered if she should "love" Castle Penrhyn: she thought of Dunleath.



The carriage stopped at a lofty gateway of stone, fringed with the drooping branches of immense firs. Something stern, solemn, and grand, was in its unadorned and unpretending structure, and the great bell rung like a knell on the evening air. There was a pause; the door of the lodge opened, and then shut again; Sir Stephen looked out with a muttered oath.

"They seem to have forgotten the key," said Eleanor.

"It is some time since I have been here," answered her husband. "I suppose there has been no carriage through for a long while: but we are expected."

He kept his eyes fixed on the lodge, out of which issued at length a beautiful young woman, followed by a handsome robust child of three or four years old, clinging to her gown, and staring at the carriages.

"Now, Bridget; open the gate, and don't keep us all night," said Sir Stephen, in a tone half angry, half familiar.

The order was obeyed; the woman hastily unlocked the gate, swung it open, and then throwing her apron over her face, began to sob aloud. The gate, which had not been opened to the hinge, swung back again on the carriage; the horses plunged, and one of the traces broke. The servant got down to assist the postillion.



“Open the carriage-door: open the door, I say,” shouted Sir Stephen, in a tone of fury.

He got out of the carriage, and seizing the young woman by the arm, spoke to her; first, apparently, in the way of menace; then arguing with her; then, as she continued to sob without answering, he released her arm, and laid his hand as if soothingly upon it; but no sooner was she freed from his detaining grasp, than she turned and ran, still weeping loudly, along the path and up the steps, into the lodge, the door of which she shut violently, and locked on the inside.

The little child who had accompanied her, stood in the road; his glance wandering from the lodge to the intruders. Sir Stephen passed him on his way to the carriage; stopped, and taking half-a-crown from his purse, put it in his hand, bidding him tell his mother Sir Stephen would speak with her in the morning.

“An, ye gar mammy greet,” said the little urchin; “I ’ll no tak ye ’re bonny big saxpence,” and he flung it under the horse’s feet, and shrunk sullenly away.

Then he retreated slowly to the door of the lodge, stopping now and then to eye the party in the road. He leaned his curly head against the door, but apparently made no plea for admittance. They saw him stand there in the evening light, like a little shaggy peasant by Gainsborough: and an artist would



have been glad of the sight; for the light was lovely, and so was the child.

Sir Stephen came back with a slow, heavy step to the carriage. The trace was mended sufficiently to drive the brief remainder of the journey; the confusion was over; they could now proceed. He took his seat by Eleanor's side.

"Oh!" said she, eagerly, "do not let us go on without saying something more to that poor soul. What is the matter? What ails her? She is in some distress. What did you say to her? Let me get out, and speak to her; it seems so cruel to drive on without further notice. Let me get out; you don't know how much wiser we women are in comforting than you men."

She smiled as she spoke, and made a movement, as if to leave the carriage. A burst of the wildest execration, a torrent of mad, furious oaths, escaped Sir Stephen.

"I think," said he still choking with passion, "that women are the d — dest fools in creation. It is not enough to be pestered by Bridget, who stands sobbing and shrieking before all the servants, but you must mix yourself up with it too, and make another scene. Let her come to her senses alone; *your* meddling won't mend matters. I've told her I'll see her in the morning, and d—n me, if I encourage this sort of thing by seeing her a minute sooner."



He paused; Eleanor was very pale.

"Well now, I dare say I 've frightened you," said he, with an awkward change of manner. "I 'm sorry I swore; I beg pardon; you 're not angry, I hope?" and he took her hand.

He pressed her hand; he kissed her; he pressed her in his arms.

"You look so pale, Eleanor; you know I can't bear to see you look in that way. It reminds me —" he paused; and merely added, "never mind my swearing; it 's a habit, you know; many a fellow swears worse than I do; I 'll break myself of it. I 'm sorry I frightened you."

Eleanor was not frightened; she was not angry; she was only very sick and faint. Her look reminded him of a day he remembered well; the day she fainted in his arms at Aspendale; the day he feared she might not live to be his wedded wife. And over her shrinking soul the same shadow was passing now, that clouded it then. The same horror and repugnance of his strength and his violence; the same vague contrasting of the calm happy past with the stormy present; of gentle looks, and words, and tones, with her new life. Her hand was in his; her wedding-ring on her finger; she had lived to be his wife, and she was not angry. Yet Sir Stephen's irritation increased; he would have preferred that she should have remon-



strated with him. He felt, however dimly, that between her soul and his, there lay "a great gulf."

He told Eleanor that the woman at the lodge, Bridget Owen, was the daughter of one of his Welsh tenants; that her husband had been transported for sheep-stealing, and that he had allowed her to leave Wales, and had given her the Lodge at the Castle, to provide her with a home away from former associations, and companions who might reproach her with her husband's disgrace. He said she was a wild tempered odd young woman, that his agent had already written to him to remove her, but he did not exactly know what to do with her.

Eleanor's gentle heart listened compassionately to this unhappy story, and early next morning, she walked to the Lodge, with the wish and intention of speaking comforting words. They were received but coldly. When Eleanor alluded to the disgrace of the husband, and the possibility of his return, after his probationary exile, a reformed man; a stare of angry amazement and a short, sullen laugh, were all the reply she elicited. She attempted to touch Bridget, by allusion to the duty of bearing cheerfully for her child's sake; but the woman's eye grew deeper in its gloom, as she drew the child from Eleanor's hand, saying:

"Let my boy be. He and I 'll trouble no one; husband or no husband."



She was impracticable. Often, as Eleanor passed the gate in the fresh mornings or the pleasant evenings, she was checked in her pity by the expression of that young handsome face; savage, sullen, and yet delicate, like a gipsy's. The little child would come down the path with the key, and take it back again without a smile, without an answer to Eleanor's greeting; a rough miniature copy of his mother; bold, wild, but never merry or caressing as children are wont to be. His dark glittering eyes haunted Eleanor. He looked, she thought, like the child of a transported felon; as Sir Stephen had said he was — but Sir Stephen lied in that matter.

Penrhyn Castle was lone, and grey, and gaunt; Sir Stephen was violent and capricious; Lady Raymond low-spirited and ill; and Eleanor relapsed into dejection. When Tib came on a visit, she found, in the blotting-book of her room, a copy of verses which had been forgotten there. For Tib liked to meet fine people, and she wrote to offer a visit, as soon as she found the Lanarks, and Lady Margaret, and the Airle were expected; and Emma and her children arriving about the same time, the house was nearly full; so Eleanor ceded for Tib's use, a little sunny spare room, looking on the garden, which she called the bower-room, and where she used to draw and paint and write; one of those cheery nooks, which people who have large fine houses always seem to select, as if



to prove that grandeur is incompatible with comfort. Tib ferreted about, in the sunny room that had so evidently been occupied, and she found, as I have said, a portfolio, that had been overlooked in arranging the apartment for her reception. Tib was like a squirrel with a nut, when she had found this portfolio; and she hastily devoured the contents, hoping to discover some little secret; or otherwise profit by the *trouvaille*.

At first her trouble was scarcely repaid; for the contents of the book seemed very uninteresting: scraps of sketches; patterns for arbours, and trellis-work; designs for cottages; ditto for a new school-house, on which was pencilled in Margaret's hand-writing, "you 've forgotten to plan a staircase, is the school-master to climb into his room on a ladder?" Rules for a general village oven, where on payment of a weekly subscription the poor might bake, (at which Tib laughed her snorting laugh, she thought the idea so ludicrous), and other matters of the same kind. But at last there was a sheet of scribbled writing; and though it was a great disappointment to find it was not a letter containing Eleanor's private sentiments to some one, but only a copy of verses, still, on an attentive perusal, they partly repaid Tib for her trouble, for they certainly seemed to have reference to young Lady Penrhyn herself.

The verses were headed "Aspendale," and Tib



remembered that Aspendale Park was the name of the place where the bride had passed her childhood. Oho! quoth Tib.

### “ASPENDALE,

“Home of my youth! within whose tranquil shades  
Peace wandered hand in hand with joy and love;  
While the wind wafted, through the slight-stemmed trees,  
The distant murmurs of the woodland dove: —  
Methinks I feel as though some magic bark  
Had borne me from thee, in an hour of gloom;  
Sped over darkest seas, impelled by storms,  
And left me, trembling, to a shipwrecked doom!  
Hearing rough billows of an unknown sea,  
Dash, ceaseless, on a bare and barren strand,  
I turn, and find no boundary but rocks,  
And all the people rugged as the land.

\* \* \* \* \*

I weary of my life; I long to hide  
From angry looks, from discord, doubt, and pain,  
The brawling riot of embittered words;  
The struggle to avoid reproach, in vain.  
So ceaseless is the torment of the time,  
So dull the weight by which I am opprest,  
So hard and hopeless of a better change —  
I yearn no more for happiness — but rest!

“Oh! that some angel from serener worlds,  
With white calm feet, and floating moveless wings,  
Unheard — its solemn presence only known  
By a soft halo on surrounding things —  
Would come at midnight; summoning my soul  
To leave the jarring tumult of the earth,  
The tasks excused, I feel too weak to bear;  
The years cut off, assigned me at my birth;  
And lifting me from Life's rough path of thorns,  
Its moaning night — its wild and perilous day —  
Fling wide the undreaded gates of solemn Death,  
And so, to peace and silence lead the way!”



Tib was not particularly fond of poetry, but she read and pondered over these verses; and she showed them to Lady Macfarren. And Tib gave it as her opinion had young Lady Penrhyn was a "deceitful, whining little toad;" and Lady Macfarren said she had no patience with such sickly sentimentality about nothing at all; when people had all the comforts of life round them, and every luxury that money could buy.

Things grew brighter when Lady Margaret came. Where did she ever come, that things did not seem the brighter? She was pained by the mood in which she found Eleanor, and questioned her closely; nor did Eleanor refuse her confidence to the friend who had been with her in such trying times. Lady Margaret was grieved; and she was also surprised. She was innocent-hearted enough to feel perplexed, at this love and no love; this earnest courtship on the part of a bridegroom, who swore at and quarrelled with his bride. Sir Stephen had seemed so passionately attached to Eleanor!

Lady Margaret sighed as she listened; and expressed regret for having advised the marriage; and then she spoke a few simple sentences, which every bride would do well to remember and treasure up.

"My dear Eleanor," she said, "the die is cast; whatever this man's faults, or the faults of his relatives may be, from him and from them you cannot now disentangle yourself. It behoves you therefore,



to bear with them. It would be expedient to do this, even were it not your duty, but it *is* your duty. Many things are expedient, more or less, in this life: there is a choice of many paths: but there is but one right, and one wrong. What it is right to do, is always clear: how it will answer to do right, is in God's hands. Take as your motto, my Eleanor, the old French device, '*Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.*' Be cheerful; be patient; look forward, do not look back. Do not take life's trials as prepared for you by God's creatures, but by God himself. Then there will be in your heart neither resentment, resistance, nor despondency; for the sense of an over-ruling Providence will support you when you would faint, and control you when you would rebel."

No doubt this was better for Eleanor, than if she had been told that her husband was a brute, and that with her beauty and accomplishments she deserved a better fate. No doubt the house was pleasanter than if all its inmates had been drawn up in battle array, and indulged in perpetual skirmishes. Tib was spiteful, but every one else was so good-humoured, that Tib was nearly neutralised. The Duchess of Lanark played the harp with her beautiful white hands and arms, and looked up to the ceiling with her soft large eyes, every evening, to the delight and wonderment of the young sportsmen who had come for a week's shooting to the Castle. The Airle was so jocular and



inclined to romp, when the time for music was over and the reels began, that Tib actually once told him with much virgin majesty, not to "forget himself." Even Lady Macfarren softened in so much good company; for it is the peculiar idiosyncrasy of those who bully persons they deem beneath them, that they invariably cringe to persons above them.

Expeditions were made to objects of interest in the neighbourhood, and one expedition caused Eleanor's heart to beat and flutter, for it was made to Dunleath. What a merry party it seemed to all but Eleanor and Margaret! What a number of horses and carriages assembled at the gate of that lovely place, and stood inside the avenue, while the party lunched and walked through the grounds: What a loaded, hospitable showy luncheon, good old Mrs. Christison had provided! What desecrating tidiness there was about the place; what red gravelled walks, and white scoured statues, and clipped laurel hedges! Dunleath was only saved from assuming the trim air of a citizen's box at Highgate, by the indestructable beauty of its scenery. The very sun-dial was scraped and cleaned and chipped, and the letters re-engraved — as though the hand of man could scrape away the shadow of all the past hours for ever and ever, and begin on a fresh score.

That sun-dial! how fondly and tearfully Eleanor looked at it; how easily her fancy conjured up the



beautiful and noble-hearted Mrs. Stuart, sitting there; teaching her children, musing on her husband's reckless extravagance, hoping, contriving, enduring. How the solemn firs seemed to keep her memory; those great rough trees that could not be pared and pruned and decorated, to suit the taste of the present occupants; but with stiff branches, which the winter's wind swayed not when it came, and brown coppered stems, that gleamed like brass in the autumn sun, stood changeless and stern, amid the attempts, as Mrs. Christison termed it, to "set a' to rights."

Oh, lovely Dunleath! how could you wear that air of trim neatness and vulgar gaiety? Were not the reckless Laird and his noble wife lying in the cold kirkyard hard by? Did not that true-hearted woman strive in vain to keep you for her son? Did not David Stuart peril and lose fame and life for your sake, senseless Dunleath?

Eleanor wandered away to the group of firs, and sat down there. She was followed by Tib's suitor, young Mr. Malcolm, who seated himself by her side; stretching his long melancholy legs from under his kilt, with a sort of telescopic extension.

"Eh!" said he with a sigh, "eh! Leddy Penrhyn, it's just a pairfect place, is it not? and she's a pairfect creature — Miss Tib. A man might be pairfectly happy at Dunleath, Mem! I'd never wish to go further. Do' ye no think it, Leddy Penrhyn?"



And Eleanor said yes; she thought Dunleath a lovely place. For she heard him enough to be conscious she was spoken to; enough to give an intelligible reply; though she was dreaming of the days, when safe and happy and unmarried, she sate by her guardian's side on the rocks of the Roaring Linn!

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The new hope.

BUT joy dawned over the waste of Eleanor's life, like the sun on a dreary landscape. Casle Penrhyn was gilded with glory. An heir was born: she was the mother of twin sons: safe, well, and the mother of twin sons, in spite of prophecies over which the nurses and old crones of the village had held many discussions, that there should "never again be an heir in the direct line."

There they were, dear children, in that cradle radiant with future hope; and they grew and prospered exceedingly. Prospered, not equally: Frederick, the younger, was strong, blooming and lovely; and Clephane, the elder, was pale and feeble. Mothers will know (if there was any difference in her love,) which Eleanor preferred. The one that was not beautiful — the one that was not strong — the one that being less to others, was more to her. Dear to her very soul, were those soft wistful intelligent eyes, the clasp



of those little slender fingers, the tones of that timid voice; dearer (if possible) than the rosy beauty of the father's favourite; the roguish, joyous, rebellious, coaxing Fred.

Children! they are a sacred happiness. Their place in our hearts is marked out in every page of Holy writ. By the mouth of a child, God reproved and doomed His High Priest; when the great house of Eli was to fall, and Hophni and Phineas to die, "both in one day." By the example of a child, Christ warned and exhorted his disciples, where they would have forbidden the company of those little ones, as intrusive and trivial in the Great Presence.

Nearer to glory they stand than we, in this world and the next! It was a gentle and not unholy fancy that made the Portuguese artist Siquiera, in one of his sweet pictures, form of millions of infant faces the floor of Heaven; dividing it thus from the fiery vault beneath, with its groups of the damned and lost. For how many women has this image been realised! How many have been saved from despair or sin by the voice and smile of these unconscious little ones? The woman who is a mother, dwells in the immediate presence of guardian angels. She will bear on for her children's sake. She will toil for them — die for them — *live* for them — which is sometimes harder still. The neglected, miserable, maltreated wife, has still one bright spot in her home: in that darkness a watch-



light burns: she has her children's love, she will strive for her children. The woman tempted by passion, has still one safeguard stronger than all with which you would surround her; she will not leave her children. The angry and outraged woman sees in those tiny features a pleading more eloquent than words; her wrath against her husband melts in the sunshine of their eyes. Idiots are they, who in family quarrels seek to punish the mother by parting her from her offspring; for in that blasphemy against nature they do violence to God's own decrees, and lift away from her heart the consecrated instruments of His power.

The fact that there are careless and unnatural mothers does not destroy the argument. So there are men who are murderers; children who are monsters; Nature makes exceptions to all her great unswerving rules; but rules they will remain to the end of time. And among them, none more general, more mighty, more unfailing, than the love of a mother for her child!

Eleanor loved her children with all the strength of her soul. Her trials and troubles and irritations seemed nothing, when balanced with this new joy. She did not know, she had not imagined, so much happiness remained upon earth. Even the thought of David Stuart, though it departed not, receded; fading into the mournful past. Memory gave place to hope. The lovely lines of Tennyson were realised



for that early sorrow, as in his poem for the early love:

"Baby fingers, waxen touches,  
Pressed it from the mother's heart."

She wept no more, she pined no more, her heart fevered no more in hours of solitude, over vague and vain imaginings of what "might have been." The tangible and real delight sufficed her. Her eyes, which had opened so sadly to the light of each recurring morn, woke with a sense of glad thanksgiving, and closed with a happy prayer for blessings on those darling heads. Castle Penrhyn no longer seemed so grey and gaunt; the voices of little children were heard up and down the great grim house like the chirping of birds among boughs; the quick patter of their merry feet running along the corridors, put a thrill of life into the old silence.

And they loved Eleanor! With what a miracle of speed the quick years flew away, which changed those unconscious infants into loving children; little friends; anxious when she was ill; sorry if she were vexed; learning to please her; able to discourse with her of what pleased them! How strange was the difference between them; and how absorbing the interest she felt, in watching that difference and training both those dawning minds.

How bewitching was Frederic, with his sweet merry temper, his jokes, his coaxing and disarming



fondness; his generosity and self-denial in the miniature trials of a child's life, his courage, his easy love that warmly responded to the smallest kindness; his dear foolish trust in all the little world he saw; and his wonderful beauty which made even strangers pause to notice him, and ask his name.

How attaching was her shy pale Clephane, whom strangers never noticed (except with a secret doubt of his mother being able to rear him), but whose worth the mother knew. His piety and good sense; his quick ability; his patience in pain and sickness; his unwillingness to give trouble; his desire to serve; his companionableness, so far beyond what is supposed possible in a child; his quick perception of what vexed her; his fond unjealous admiration of his brother; his humble unquestioning acceptance of his own position towards his father, as something less loving, strong, and attractive, and therefore less to be valued than Frederic. All, made Eleanor's heart yearn to him in secret, as every mother's heart will yearn to feebleness or defect; as the bird spreads her cherishing wings over her nestlings, because they are callow and cold.

And little Clephane's love for his mother was a sort of fervent adoration. No one else cared for him; but he had an instinct that her great love for him outsummed all he could hope from others. Often had the golden link been nearly broken. Often had his



mother sate through the long nights and heavy days, a patient sentinel, guarding that life so dear to her with the shadow of Death for her fellow-watcher. And blooming Frederic would break away from his nurse as he went up stairs from his walk, and come in, a little too suddenly perhaps for a sick room — fresh as a rose; his bright eyes full of love and eagerness; his long brown hair dishevelled by the wind; and clasping his healthy little arms round his brother's neck, adjure him to get well — to “get well, and come out; it is so pleasant out of doors!” And Sir Stephen would come in, and stand gazing for a few minutes at the little invalid, with feelings half of pity and half of discontent. He thought if Eleanor managed better, the boy would surely be stronger. He had never seen illness; he could not comprehend it. His sister had always been robust; he himself was a Hercules. There were moments when he experienced a sort of disgust and impatience to the ailing child, who was never well enough to follow him as Frederic did. He tried to take him, once or twice; but once Clephane sate meekly down after a while, saying:

“I'll wait for your turning back, papa, on this big stone.”

And once he had to return with him, and carry him part of the way; so Sir Stephen bid the child for the future “keep with his mother,” and contented himself with the company of the stronger twin, who skipped



after him like a little kid, and already showed an idolatrous admiration for his father's prowess in field sports.

"Come and see the stag papa has killed, Clephane; only come and see; such a big fellow that papa has shot down! When I'm big, I'll kill the stags. Come and sit upon his back; papa, put me on his back. He's got such horns! you never saw such horns! Come!"

And hand-in-hand the twins would go; till Clephane shrank back a little, awed and sick, from the dead stately prey. And Sir Stephen, giving Frederic an exulting swing in the air and catching him in his strong arms, would pronounce him "his own fine boy — his own king of men." And Sir Stephen spoke truth, when he said that he never was so fond of mortal thing, as he was of his boy Frederic.

So the children grew and prospered, and were taught and trained, and loved and cherished; and the Welsh tenantry knew that an heir was born to inherit the land they dwelt on; and the Highland tenantry saw the boys from time to time, and drank their health at tenant dinners; and once were elated to a pitch of intense enthusiasm by little Frederic standing on the table to answer the toast by his father's desire; while Clephane sate smiling by. A roar of approbation followed the hesitating sentence spoken by the healthy, handsome, blushing, and yet bold little child; a roar of approbation, and then his health was drunk as "the



heir." Sir Stephen rectified the mistake, and the eyes of the rough assembly fell with some disappointment on Clephane. Children are quick in feeling; quicker than grown people believe. Clephane sighed and coloured; his neighbour happened to be Tib's lank suitor, Mr. Malcolm. He put one of his long arms round the boy, and said kindly:

"Tak' heart, mon; I was but a puir bit wean mysel', and see noo what a mon I grew. Maybe ye'll be sich another."

Which caused little Clephane to laugh; for even to him, Mr. Malcolm seemed anything but the beau-ideal of what he desired to become; but he felt the kindness, and spoke of it to his mother when he went home; and gaunt Mr. Malcolm might have been quite puzzled, if a gipsy had told him that a beautiful lady thought kindly of him that night before she went to sleep, assuring him at the same time that it was not Tib.

Lady Margaret was almost as glad as Eleanor when the twins were born; and Eleanor sent her some verses she wrote while they were still little things. Verses, not forgotten in her blotting-book, to be ferreted out by Tib, like those she wrote in her days of despondency, but copied cheerfully in a letter to her friend. And when that best of friends came to see her and the children, she bent over the bed where they lay and tenderly repeated the last two lines, gently kissing the little sleepers; after which she also kissed Eleanor,



“as a reward,” said she, laughingly, “for having made the verses.” And though bright Margaret spoke in jest, I do not see why a kiss from her pure true mouth should not be as good a reward for a copy of verses, as compliments from kings, or the kiss a queen once bestowed on ugly Alain Chartier; on which occasion the amazed ladies of honour were assured, that her majesty kissed him “not as a man, but as an author.”

But Eleanor needed no reward; not even Margaret’s kiss: the subject of her verses lay smiling before her, and that was enough.

### “THE BIRDIE’S SONG.

“As I came o’er the distant hills,  
I heard a wee bird sing:  
O pleasant are the primrose buds  
In the perfumed breath of spring!  
And pleasant are the mossy banks,  
Beneath the birchen bowers, —  
But a home wherein no children play,  
Is a garden shorn of flowers!

“And once again I heard the bird,  
His song was loud and clear:  
How glorious are the leafy woods  
In the summer of the year!  
All clothed in green, the lovely boughs  
Spread wide o’er land and lea, —  
But the home wherein no son is born,  
Is a land without a tree!

“The birdie ceased its happy song,  
I heard its notes no more;



The water rippled silently  
To the blue lake's quiet shore:  
But a mother sang her cradle hymn:  
'All hallowed be your rest,  
And angels watch the shining heads  
That leaned on Jesus's breast!'"

## CHAPTER XXV.

London.

ELEANOR, and her little sons, and Lady Raymond, did not however always remain in their Highland retirement. Glencarrick and Castle Penrhyn claimed them in the autumn of the year; but Sir Stephen was member for a county, and, except the first year of her marriage, and the year she was ill of a fever, Eleanor had always been in London during the parliamentary season. She lived in that circle which those who compose it call the great world, and which, numerically, is a little world; for after you have been in London for two or three seasons, you begin to know almost every one in it. Eleanor did not like the great world a bit better now than when she first came out as a young lady with Margaret as her chaperon; but she liked the power of receiving a pleasant circle at her own house, and she saw a great deal of the Duke and Duchess of Lanark and Lady Margaret. Less of the Duke than of the Duchess, for he was greatly occupied with politics and little at home. But Eleanor grew to like the Duchess, and to see what was valu-



able in her. There is something valuable in all persons, if we would look for that instead of their faults.

Her frivolity seemed less, where all were more or less frivolously occupied; her kindliness greater, where so few were kindly, so many much the reverse; her vanity pardonable, in the flood of flattery which greeted her. She was not bound to test it, and find what would remain if her real merits stood clear from the influence of acquired advantages of rank and position. She scorned no one. She was bitter to no one. She was a little jealous of Margaret's fondness for Eleanor, but she was gentle and kind nevertheless; and to Eleanor, gentleness was ever a charm — a charm to which the stiff fierceness of Lady Macfarren, the shrewd spite of Tib, and the violence of Sir Stephen, stood out as habitual foils.

Politics, which occupied Sir Stephen and absorbed the Duke of Lanark, had no charm for young Lady Penrhyn. At best it appeared to be a sort of surgical profession; painful, tedious, often revolting, the operations necessary to amend the diseased condition of society. Perhaps she stood too near the great forge of government to judge calmly. She saw too much of the machinery, for one who so imperfectly comprehended the results; the black oily wheels; the suffocating atmosphere; the ceaseless din; the weary labour; these she saw; but not the pattern of gorgeous tapestry on which History was weaving a further measure of events.



She saw many sudden conversions; much toadeating and fawning; apparent breaches of faith, defended by the eloquent, pardoned by the good; friendships broken, friends supplanted, chiefs deserted; men who were once the stars of a circle, forgotten and neglected, flung aside like blunt tools no longer capable of work. She saw some whose hands could once have lifted the aspirant, trampled on as a stepping-stone to power; and some who once craftily sued, become haughtily tyrannical. She saw, with amazed eyes, the little faults of great men; the little hinges on which great interests turn. She thought of her father's weary struggling life, as David Stuart had described it to her, and wondered if men of equal talent and earnestness were toiling still, as thanklessly, in the service of the public and of their party.

To Margaret these matters wore a brighter aspect. From childhood she had lived in society where they formed the constant theme of discussion. Her beloved brother's talents were exerted in that line: she looked forward to seeing him in power. He had formed her opinions; and his "peerless Margaret" was proud of comprehending what he taught her. To Margaret, political life was a stirring and glorious career.

The same difference of thought existed between the two friends in the lighter currents of Eleanor's new world of fashion. It requires really to belong to that strange world — to be brought up amongst that par-



ticular set, and so get the senses gradually blunted to the frivolity, pomposity, soul-deep (not manner-deep) vulgarity, and the wonderful profligacy of opinion which is combined with outward formalities, to be able to watch it all calmly. A full-grown human being, dropped suddenly into the turmoil of what is called the great world, is apt to become sobered and saddened, if not disgusted, and to go home feeling depressed and dusty, like one who has taken a long unsatisfactory walk.

All her life long, Lady Margaret had lived in this land of the Bore-ians: she was accustomed to them. She was not travelling like Eleanor through a new country, where everything was salient novel and peculiar. And though she felt some differences in her own heart, the experience rather enabled her to choose at once the companions most genial, cordial, and real, than taught her to pause over the faults of others.

Eleanor was always comparing the people she saw, with her own ideal of men and things. She was like a child seeing fantoccini for the first time: Margaret had seen the fantoccini dancing all her life. Eleanor fell into the great and grievous mistake of supposing people who seemed all so much alike in manner, in pursuits, in conversational topics and conventional decorums, must be alike in heart and soul: Margaret knew that the uniform worn by the fashionable corps,



no more compelled nature than the soldier's uniform annuls the variety of disposition or levels the worthy and unworthy in a regiment; that in the same crowd where she saw those she could not but despise, she also saw those she respected from her soul; and that the worth of the latter did not rub off like the bloom of the plum, in the process of shaking hands with the former.

The Duke came into the breakfast-room one morning, and found Eleanor reading the paper.

"What an improvement, Lady Penrhyn! I really believe you are studying the debates, at last!"

"Do not hope it," said Margaret, laughing; "I am sure Eleanor was reading either a murder, or a charity case; and she was thinking of the 'Times,' and the 'Times' Commissioner, as two mysterious beings who go about spying into abuses in disguise — like Caliph Haroun Alraschid and his Vizier. Confess, Eleanor, is not that your notion?"

"That the 'Times' Commissioner goes about with a turban on, and an aigrette of jewels in it — no: but that the power of the press is a very wonderful power, much more wonderful than that of the Caliph in the 'Arabian Tales' — yes."

"And quite as liable to abuse."

"I doubt," said the Duke, "whether any power exists, equally great, and equally irresponsible, that is so little abused as the press of England. The com-



plaints made of it from time to time tend, rather to show the confidence the public has in its general impartiality, and the high expectations formed of the line expected to be pursued by these exponents of popular opinion, than to condemn it. No general of an army, no admiral of a fleet, has as much irresponsible power as the editor of one of the great London journals; with less responsible control, for he has this difficulty to contend with, that his men are not bound to his opinions; he can't shoot one as a deserter, or hang up another to the yard-arm for going over to the enemy. Nor can we, (fortunately,) shoot our editors as we did Admiral Byng, for defect of judgment in fighting our battles. The editor fights them as he pleases: we can neither reward nor degrade him; and for my part I think, when we consider the multitude of minds employed, the variety of contending interests involved, and the rapidity of decision with which all this has to be sifted and arranged; we should rather marvel at the ability with which the task is executed, than dwell on occasional fallibility of judgment, or perverted intentions. Any one would suppose by the magnificent idea of unswerving justice and perfection we attach to the idea of an editor, that we believed the leading journals of the day to be conducted by the archangels Gabriel and Michael, instead of men liable to the same prejudices, passions, and errors with ourselves; though probably possessed of thrice our



ability, and forty times our industry in turning that ability to account."

"What I was thinking of," said Eleanor, "was a power apart from political discussion, the simple power of publication. How many wrongs have been redressed, that never would even have been known, without the aid of the press? It is the speaking-trumpet of the poor, by which they can hail those classes at a distance from them. That alone is a glorious power."

"Yes; and even that is often misjudged: for I have seen it gravely argued by our continental neighbours (who are apt to see great moral questions in an inverted point of view), that our neglect of the labouring classes is proved, by our publications of inquiries into their condition. Happy the people whose rights are fought out in the columns of the daily papers, instead of among the stones of the barricades! Happy the people who are taught to look upon gradation as God's law, not man's oppression; and who appeal to the classes that have wealth and leisure, for aid, — not for equality!"

"And happy the people who find the most fervent upholders of their rights among those very classes; is not that the last clause of the speech, Lanark?" said Margaret fondly; and she looked in her brother's countenance while she spoke.

He smiled in answer, and then said:



"I came to tell you a great piece of news, which indeed you ought to have known last night, but that you were all gone to bed when I came in. There is a change of Ministry, and I have accepted my share of the trouble of the day. I am to be First Lord of the Admiralty. I see you are speechless with triumph already, Margaret. I am twice the man in your feminine eyes, that I was yesterday, now that I am in office. But I must be very busy, so good bye."

"Now, can you tell why you also should be nearly as glad as I am?" said Margaret, as her eyes returned from following her brother to the door of the breakfast-room.

"Can anything be indifferent to me which makes your cheek flush, and your eyes sparkle so? Can anything be little to me, which is so much to you all? Of course, I am glad — so glad, dear Margaret."

"You heard Lanark say he was to be First Lord of the Admiralty?"

"Yes; I was surprised: I did not know he had been in the navy."

"Neither has he been in the navy, you poor little ignoramus. The First Lord of the Admiralty need not be in the navy, any more than the Secretary at War need be in the army, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer a banker; but do you see how his being First Lord especially interests you?"



"Me! No."

"Do you know one Lieutenant Marsden, now on shore; very anxious to get a ship, very restless, and very discontented?"

"Oh! dearest Margaret," said Eleanor, clasping her hands with sudden seriousness, "if the Duke would indeed be so good; if, in consideration of my disastrous story, and Godfrey's real generosity at the time, though it was hardly, sternly done — he would do us this great service."

"Softly, softly, my Eleanor. You that were so innocent a minute ago, and now propose, in the most barefaced manner, a regular job. 'In consideration of your story, and Godfrey's generosity,' indeed! That would never do. No: in consideration of the merits of this excellent young officer, who has been miraculously overlooked; who lost three fingers boarding a slave-cutter, and passed five years on the fatal coast of Sierra Leone."

"Oh, never, Margaret."

"Well, my dear, I don't say precisely those claims; but some claims a man must advance. I shall mention the three fingers, and the coast of Sierra Leone."

"No, no," said Eleanor, laughing.

"And I shall add, that he was a step-son of General Sir John Raymond, whose services in India speak for themselves."



“Ah! my poor father! That is true; though they say your political party, Margaret, are more famous for trying to conciliate their foes, than for rewarding their old friends; still less the relations of old friends, and of friends who are dead and gone, and can serve them no longer.”

“You will make a poor petitioner, Eleanor, if you are so bitter. It is well I am to coax Lanark out of a ship, instead of you. Canning’s ‘needy knife-grinder,’ who would not feel his wrongs, is the right model for the politically-neglected.”

“Am I bitter? Well, it is only when I think of my father; how his life was worn out of him in its very meridian, by thankless friends, grumbling at home at the difficulty of passing their half-digested measures abroad; no one helping, or caring for him. But I will not talk of it any more. Get a ship for Godfrey, Margaret. You will see I can thank, better than I can petition.”

Meanwhile, Godfrey and Emma were invited to stay with Eleanor in town; and as ships are not obtained, commissioned, given away, and sent to foreign stations in a day; some little delay intervened, before the petition so easily settled between the two fair friends, could even be considered. Then there were a number of previous just claims. Then there was another opportunity of which Margaret and Eleanor had made very sure, and which, I regret to say, I



really think the Duke ought to have made the occasion of Godfrey's advancement; but his duchess took a fit of extreme jealousy and displeasure at Margaret's interference; her large eyes had such an ill-used expression while she played the harp, and her answers were so peevish, that sundry explanations resulted with the Duke; and eventually a *protégé* of hers, a cousin she had never cared about and whom she never would have cared to see promoted, but for the sake of proving her own influence, was appointed instead of Godfrey. The Duke looked a little confused when he answered Margaret's glad interrogation — "Well, I suppose Godfrey is to have the 'Niobe?'" by the announcement that it was promised to Captain Wallace; and Margaret looked surprised; but after a moment's thought she kissed her brother's cheek and said, "Well; we must look forward." And that evening, when the Duchess had played through the last rapid variation of an air which ought never to have had variations composed on it, for it was the mournful "Farewell to Lochaber," Margaret said gently:

"I wish you would exert your influence with Lanark, in a matter Eleanor has much at heart; and that is, getting Godfrey named to a ship. His claims are real enough, but in his over-crowded profession, it is a chance when a man gets them considered, if he has no one to speak for him."



The Duchess smiled, and said she would be very glad to do anything for Eleanor. Her opposition was withdrawn; she had been petitioned to! The next opportunity, however, was given away to the son of a political supporter; it was "advisable" to do this, and the Duke had to consider what was advisable. The next, to the brother of a political opponent; there was some grumbling about that, but it passed, and being successful, was considered an excellent bold stroke; the next chance was swallowed up in one of those arrangements sometimes made in high quarters, the preliminaries of which had been arranged before the Duke held office. Some great man's nephew was a lawyer, and the Chancellor was to do something for him, on condition a certain young captain had something done for him. It was now the young captain's turn. So Godfrey waited for his opportunity; though he had what is called "such good interest;" and while he waited he staid with Eleanor and saw a little of "the great world."

And Godfrey took care neither to feel, nor to show, the smallest gratitude to any one concerned in the exertions now making to serve him. He considered Eleanor to be doing no more than her duty in being mindful of his interests, and that his claims had hitherto been most unduly overlooked. He did not scruple to sneer at and criticise the conduct of public men in general, and the party in power in particular,



even in presence of the Duke. He also declared that if he had the world to begin again, he would not enter a profession where a fellow might be knocked about all his life, without better reward than seeing other men who hadn't served half the time put over his head; and on the Duke reminding him, with a frank good-humoured smile, that he at least was still comparatively young; he replied dictatorially, that the Board of Admiralty was very apt to tell a man he was "too young" for promotion, until the time came when they could tell him that he was "too old." And Lady Raymond sighed, and said that was but too true; and pressed her son's hand as if it were the hand of a martyr.

And the Duke told Margaret privately, that her friend's brother might be a brave excellent officer, an honest man, a good son, and a true Christian; but that he thought him the most disagreeable companion he had ever fallen in with. And Margaret sighed: not for Godfrey's sake, but for a passing remembrance of poor David Stuart's declaration in days of old, that he was puzzled how one so worthy could be so intolerable. Intolerable, thought Margaret, only because so utterly intolerant!

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

GODFREY was not intolerable to Sir Stephen. It was a strange link to knit brothers-in-law together; but it is certain Sir Stephen liked, in Godfrey, the sort of determined attempt to "keep Eleanor under," which the stern Lieutenant still evinced, in spite of her marriage and altered position. They recurred to past times too; as they did at Penrhyn Castle, as they did whenever they met. They abused David Stuart to their heart's content; they poured out alternate vials of wrath and scorn upon his memory. By one of the strange twists of human feeling, Godfrey was glad to be in Eleanor's house and yet independent of her, to be there as her husband's friend, more than as her brother. Nor was he without thankfulness that his mother had, in this man's house, a luxurious unmolested home; though he loathed the memory of the man whose treachery made such dependance a matter of necessity. As to Lady Raymond, her dependance sat very lightly upon her; it seemed to her, to be on her own child. She saw little of Sir Stephen; she once saw him in a passion, and his violence frightened her so, that she became hysterical and continued ill for many days: but Eleanor never spoke to her mother of her husband, so that beyond whispering to Godfrey that "Sir Stephen seemed a terrible man when provoked," she had nothing to communicate respecting



him; and to that, Godfrey only responded sternly, "that he presumed Eleanor knew the duty of obedience to her husband, however wilful her girlhood might have been:" and common-place Emma ventured on a little spontaneous observation, (which she made, poor soul, in the innocent sincerity of her heart,) that "it was so noble and generous of Sir Stephen marrying Eleanor when she had nothing, that Eleanor could not fail to love him, and look up to him."

As to the world of fashion, it was an embodiment of all that Godfrey most contemned; and hot were the discussions sometimes, when Lady Margaret was of the party and defended what Godfrey called the "corrupt set," she belonged to. Her opposition however was not near so provoking to Godfrey as Eleanor's neutrality, who, after arguing a little, had a habit of withdrawing into the refuge of silence; or going, as Sir Stephen impolitely expressed it, "into one of her d—d sullen fits."

For Sir Stephen was no longer "in love" with Eleanor. Perhaps even if he had been, he might have been impolite: there are a particular class of men who seem to imagine they have paid their wives so extraordinary a compliment in marrying them, that they are released from the tax of all future civilities. They have given a premium, and are to live rent-free.

A conversation which Godfrey partly overheard



between the Duchess, Lady Margaret, and his sister — as he stood, talking to nobody, knowing nobody, swinging his hat in the middle of the room — gave him an excellent text for his criticisms.

A lady, elegant, though not pretty, came up to the party. She shook hands with the Duchess of Lanark with a little eager squeeze, then with Margaret; and after passing Mrs. Godfrey, who intervened, as if she had been merely a part of the ottoman, she extended one finger and half a smile, to Eleanor, and glided on towards the Duke, with whom she was soon engaged in what seemed a playful animated conversation.

“Aha!” said the Duchess of Lanark, “Lady Eliza has found out that you will never be of any use, Eleanor. Don’t you remember what a friend she made of you the first two seasons you came to London?”

“But how do you mean that I can be of no use? What did she expect of me?”

“Oh!” said Margaret, laughing, “the Duchess means, that with all your undeniable beauty, and your foolish cleverness that you keep for home friends instead of turning it to account, you have no *savoir faire*.”

“But what does she want of me?”

“She wants of you, what she wants of us all. She has always some little intrigue on foot; some influence



to exert; some one to protect, or some one to frustrate, in the political world; and you are precisely the person, on a casual inspection, to further her views."

"With political people? with Ministers? O, Margaret!"

"Why not? Ministers are but men; and men from their hard occupied intellectual lives, very glad to unbend. They are as merry as schoolboys, at a fish dinner at Greenwich. Besides, you are quite capable of conversing with most men, Eleanor; you must be conscious of that. Now, Lady Eliza has gone on, all her life, carefully selecting and carefully dropping her acquaintance. She has no friends, in *your* innocent translation of the word; but she has a circle; and there is not one of that circle that she does not turn to account. If any of the set prove useless, or drop in the estimation of the world, down they go in Lady Eliza's. That winning smile, and *accueil gracieux*, alter and fade into the genteelest little stare of alienation possible."

"There, and that is your world!" said Godfrey scornfully, as he listened to the close of the last sentence.

"I did not make the world, Mr. Marsden," said Margaret, laughing; "I found it so when I came into it, and I am afraid I shall leave it so, when I go out of it."



“It should teach you to despise and scorn those you live amongst.”

“No, it should teach me only not to pin my faith on chance acquaintances, instead of home friends. Half the discontents of life might be avoided, if we were content within our natural boundaries. Units as we are, ought not the inclining of the hearts of some eight or ten familiar persons towards us, to satisfy our need? but no; we insist on strangers valueing, and liking, and esteeming, and standing firmly by us; as if they could, as if they would, as if it were possible.”

“They need not, at all events, forsake you; as you have just described. If they find fault, let them also hear justification.”

“Justification! My dear Mr. Marsden, you may not be able to give it; you cannot walk up to strangers, and say, ‘I fear you have heard that I am stingy, stupid, immoral, violent; I beg to assure you, on the contrary, that I am the most generous, sprightly, well-conducted person alive.’ Even if you could, you have yet to learn how the world will be bored by your wrongs, and yawn over your arguments. The world don’t care a brass farthing whether you are falsely accused or no; why should it? Your friends care; justify yourself to them. Surely, the little circle who willingly draw round us, is better than the ranks of foes and neutrals we are for ever seeking to pene-



trate. What can it signify what is said by a heap and herd of people who don't know you? And yet I have sometimes seen people more angry at the dislike of strangers, than at the defection of friends."

"Why, no man likes to be dropped and shunned; nor any woman either, I should suppose; as your Lady Elizas seem to be in the habit of doing."

"It ought to be indifferent to us; as no social flattery can make a bad man esteem himself, or feel other than what he is — a successful knave — so no social neglect can deprive man or woman of their real consciousness of desert. Besides, what, after all, is the dropping and shunning of the world? they don't think it worth while to invite you, or they won't invite you, to mortify you. Is it such a loss? Do those who are invited say, 'I 'm so sorry for you! I am going to this or that delightful party!' Do they not, on the contrary, very often lament the hard fate that compels their attendance as a matter of form? Do they not say, 'I must go, just for once, for half an hour, to show myself, and this is the third Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday I have failed,' Once in a dozen times you may regret not having been asked; you may wish to see somebody, or something; or you may feel hurt, because the slight is from some unexpected quarter, or from some one to whom you yourself have formerly shown cordial hospitality; but the other eleven times it would be a bore. Are you



less cheerful or well entertained in your own house, reading a pleasant book, or chatting with one or two friends who have at least the merit of voluntarily seeking your society, than in a crowded room, saying the same thing over and over again to a number of hot inattentive people, and getting a half-welcome from great lords, or what the Vicar of Wakefield wittily calls, a 'mutilated curtsey' from fine ladies?"

"You are a fine lady yourself, Lady Margaret, and you defend all that is done in that preposterous set; moreover you cannot possibly tell, by your own experience, what it is to be snubbed, or looked down upon."

"All sets are alike," said Margaret, laughing. "When I was very young, I had an excellent lesson against being 'fine,' as you call it. Mr. Fordyce wished me to go to a ball at the house of a Scotch physician; I demurred, because it was not my 'set,' but he wished it, and I went. Of course I knew no one. As I sate alone (musing rather saucily, I must own, on the inferior company I had honoured with my presence) two young men sauntered through the room.

"'Oh!' said one, 'what a beautiful face: who is she? I'll get introduced, and ask her to dance.'

"'No, no, Brooks, don't,' said his companion eagerly, 'she's been sitting there alone all night: it's somebody that nobody knows.'



"I could not help laughing; and then I did what was wiser than laughing, I reflected that these people were not a bit more ridiculous, in fact, than I had been in my secret heart; and whenever in after years I felt a little inclined to play the fine lady, I remembered Mr. Brooks and his friend, and my own temporary obscurity."

"Ah! but you would have been indulgent and cordial without any such lesson, Margaret," interposed Eleanor. "It is in you — it is in your nature — to be indulgent, to be generous."

"Indulgent to whom?" said the Duke, who had left Lady Eliza, and now joined the group before Godfrey. "Are ladies ever indulgent to each other?"

"We are, you see," said Margaret, smiling.

"You are an exception to the general rule," sneered Godfrey; "for the inhumanity of women to each other is notorious."

"Ah! what is called inhumanity; the not giving each other support under untoward circumstances. That is very often more often cowardice than cruelty."

"Oh, Margaret, this time Godfrey is right; nothing amazes me like the unkindness of women to each other. I assure you I have felt quite startled at hearing them; I have wondered how happy creatures, laying their protected heads on safe home-pillows, could judge so hardly as they do, others who perhaps, have led a life of tears; some one, perhaps, who has



neither home, mother, or child, to keep her from drifting with the tide."

"Yes, and their indulgence, when they do give it," said Godfrey eagerly, "is given so idiotically. You see them all petting and making much of some foolish wanton, with a high-spirited kindly husband, vainly trying to reclaim her, and all set against some woman twice as noble-hearted as her would-be judges. They always combine against the wrong person."

"They don't combine at all;" said Lady Margaret. "They are the only visible realisation of that political Irishism, an 'armed neutrality.' With respect to any woman in an awkward position, they are all ready to fall upon her as a victim, or to uphold, or to let her alone; but chance must decide which it shall be."

"Chance and self interest," said Godfrey. "There is a great talk of English morality, but you may ride roughshod over the morality of the whole country, if you can but put a pair of gold spurs to your heels."

"A little of that, perhaps," said the Duke; "but the main reason (if Margaret will forgive my saying so), is the want of justice which is apparent in every woman; and which is, in fact, a want of understanding. If any proof were needed of the inferiority of intellect in women, it would be found in their treatment of each other. They are all, and always, unjust. They are often kind. You can have tenderness, pity, enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, any thing from them except



justice. That is a male virtue. For that they have neither courage nor comprehension. If they uphold a cause, it is because they are 'so sorry' for some one. Often they are 'sorry,' and yet dare not for their lives uphold. Often, as Mr. Marsden has said, they uphold, with a perversion of the real merits of different cases, that would make one smile, if it did not make one sigh. Those from whom better things might be expected, are not exempt. One of the rudest acts I ever saw done by one woman to another, was by a lady then occupied in compiling a history. Fit you are, I thought, to sift the facts of history, who cannot even judge those of your own time. And the event proved I was right. When the book came out, it was most womanly. Graphic and interesting as a narrative; admirable as a moral work; but of no more value as an historical record, (from that very defect, an utter want of justice, an absence of the power of conviction, a leaning and swaying first to one feminine prejudice and then to another), than a book of fables. A man would have produced a history; the woman produced a very excellent story-book for the school-room."

"Well, Lanark," said the Duchess rather pettishly, "you are the last person I should have expected to run down our sex; you, who are always paying us compliments. I am sure Margaret and I have good reason to be surprised at your opinions to-night."



“My opinion to-night, has been my opinion always,” said the Duke gently; “but, perhaps, if I had not the happy consciousness that neither of those dearest to me — neither my wife, nor my sister, ever indulge in that bitterness which all men hate to hear, I should not express it. There are three sorts of tolerance: the tolerance of tenderness, and that,” said he with a smile, “you certainly have; the tolerance of carelessness, which I should be sorry to see in any one I loved; and the tolerance of justice, which I agree with Margaret in thinking the nearest approach we can make to the angelic nature. And now let us all go to bed.”

Which accordingly they did; rather to Godfrey's discomfiture, who had intended in spite of the lateness of the hour, to argue that pure true justice was totally inconsistent with tolerance. He was so full of this, that he even talked of it to Emma on their way home; but desisted on her simply confessing that she had been too drowsy to hear the latter part of the evening's conversation: in fact she feared she had been asleep; but hoped no one had observed it, as it would have seemed so rude, when they were talking about what interested them all so much. She thought people ought to be kind to each other, and merciful; but certainly, as Godfrey said, one ought not to be indulgent to those who were doing what they knew was wrong.

So Godfrey left off talking to his wife; and open-



ing his dressing-room door impatiently, entered and shut it again with a hard determined clap, as though it had been a trap in which he had just caught a sinner; and while he undressed, he wondered how long it would be before he could obtain a ship, and get afloat.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### Events.

At length the frigate was obtained: Godfrey was exceedingly glad, and no one was the least sorry, except Emma. The amount of love in her simple heart, for that square stern man, none knew but Heaven. She did not talk of it; for Emma was not eloquent, and she was extremely shy: only once, when confidentially questioned by the Duchess of Lanark, (who was very curious about other women's homes, and the degrees of affection and comfort enjoyed therein), she owned hesitatingly, that she thought Godfrey "very grand — the grandest creature that ever was." And though the Duchess might puzzle a little over the exact meaning of the phrase, it obviously implied an intense conviction of his superiority which being precisely the feeling Godfrey most wished to inspire, it is to be presumed he was contented with his wife.

It would have been hard indeed upon her had he not been contented! Faithfully she did her duty "in



that state of life into which it had pleased God to call her;" and it may be, that her soul walked the path to heaven with more certainty than many a brighter intelligence. Her children were as carefully trained as Eleanor's; and though none were as lovely as Frederic, or as clever as Clephane, they were good and governable. Even the last new baby (*vice* a first, second, and third baby, superseded) had its own green bud of a notion of right and wrong; and put down its little wilful, quivering lip and shook the tears from its glittering eyes, at the uplifted finger, warning it not to let

"Its angry passions rise,"

long before it was old enough to comprehend the sweet lines in the volume of hymns by Dr. Watts, which Emma kept in her pocket, and which she continually referred to; saying that it put all she wanted to say to the children "into such nice words!"

Oh, Watts! gentle-hearted old man! did you ever foresee the universal interest which would link itself to your name, among the innocent hearts of earth? Did angels reveal to you in your own death-hour, how many a dying child would murmur your pleasant hymns as its farewell to earth? — how many living children repeat them as their most familiar notions of prayer? Did you foretel, that in your native land and wherever its language is spoken, the purer and least



sinful portion of the ever-shifting generations, would be trained with your words? And now, in that better world of glory, whose mysteries of companionship we are not allowed to penetrate, do the souls of young children crowd round you? do you hold sweet converse with those, who perhaps were first led into the track of glory by the faint light which those sparks of your soul left on earth? Do they recognise you, the souls of our departed little ones — souls of the children of the long ago dead; souls of the children of the living; lost and lamented, and then fading from memory like sweet dreams?

It may be so; and that when the great responsible gift of authorship is accounted for, your crown will be brighter than that bestowed on philosophers and sages!

As the departure of Godfrey drew near, Emma had a hard struggle to keep back all evidence of her sorrow; for she knew it displeased her stern helpmate, and she knew that it was in the natural course of his profession that he should make these long absences. Still, such partings are hard; and it is lonesome and dispiriting, to live on a narrow income, with helpless children, the husband and father away in storms and danger! So may God bless all sailors' wives, say I; may those they wait for, come back in safety over the trackless ocean to their own sea-surrounded country;



and may they always find a heart as innocently glad of their return, as poor Emma Marsden's!

Eleanor would fain have lessened the loneliness of her sister-in-law, by making her reside under her own roof during Godfrey's absence; but this he did not like; it did not accord with his notions of independence; and he preferred that his wife should remain in her own little cottage, and superintend her humble establishment.

Before the ship sailed, two events took place, which in different degrees, saddened them all. Lady Raymond died; and Lady Margaret Fordyce was summoned to Italy by the old Duchess of Lanark. Lady Raymond died very happily, seeing in Eleanor's destiny only a very comfortable position in life, and in her sweet children happiness for years to come.

Old Mrs. Christison sent her careful prescriptions for preparing Iceland moss jelly (which, it is fair to the kind old lady to state, were copied out with tears of anxiety); and Lady Raymond had so great a faith in the little gossiping tender Scotchwoman, that for many days previous to her decease she would take nothing but "a little of Mrs. Christison's moss," and begged Eleanor would tell her so.

It was a bond between Eleanor and that simple heart afterwards, that in her limited and narrow way she had done her best always to serve and soothe the gentle creature, who had at least departed this life



without ever knowing what it was *not* to be served and soothed, in times of trial, sickness, or grief.

Godfrey's regret for his mother, was strong and vehement. As the boat rowed off that took him on board his new ship, and he looked back and reflected that when next he touched old England's shores, she would not be there to welcome him; he folded his arms hard across his breast, and the sailors thought they had never seen so stern-faced a commander; yet Godfrey was nearer a burst of weeping at that moment than ever he had been in his life. He loved his mother, dearly and well. He lamented her, sorely and long.

Eleanor thought, as a matter of course, the money which Charles had restored to Lady Raymond, might now return to his wife; and she was somewhat surprised at the angry refusal of Sir Stephen to perform what she thought a moderate piece of generosity. Sir Stephen judged differently. He said there could be no doubt Godfrey's view was a just one: that Sir John Raymond would have left him no legacy at all, if he had imagined it possible his own daughter would be penniless; and, therefore, the retaining it as her portion was a matter of course.

Eleanor sighed. They were so rich, it made little difference to them; it would make a great difference to Emma and her children. But she had not power to decide it otherwise.



The year of Lady Raymond's death, Eleanor passed entirely at Castle Penrhyn and Glencarrick. Her children were at once her solace and her joy; and little Clephane's health seemed to have made a wonderful rally. His spirits were gayer, his step more elastic; and the blooming Frederic was not always Sir Stephen's sole companion.

In her Highland retirement young Lady Penrhyn was idolised and blessed. Many a scheme for the poor, many a good work, that had been set on foot at Aspendale, was now repeated in the sunny obscurity of these northern hills. Her plans and her schools, which had endured for years before it was the fashion to be interested in these things, were copied, as unacknowledged hints, in later days. Individual examples are the hinges on which the great doors of reform and progress turn. Many an experimental struggle of this kind is made, before some great good name forms a rallying point, and hangs a sort of banner over good deeds — before the philanthropy of vanity makes that glorious, which was before merely useful. Eleanor had her clubs, her schools, her aids to emigration, her little land allotments, her prizes for spinning and weaving, her adult female society for teaching home usefulness to those who were to be thrifty poor men's wives, without either the encouragement of praise, or the assistance of subscriptions. Silently, obscurely, she worked; and long afterwards,



when others were doing the same sort of thing on a more dazzling scale, they said they thought they recollected seeing an attempt of that kind in Scotland, on Sir Stephen Penrhyn's property; but a mere attempt; nothing like what they were doing themselves, and what the whole world were called to look on at.

Among the objects of interest at the Castle, she had at first greatly exerted herself in favour of the handsome young Welshwoman at the Lodge; but life and life's experience wrought a great change in Eleanor's feelings in this particular case. On their arrival, her frequent patient attempts to lead Bridget Owen to talk of her position and her misfortunes, were frustrated by sullen silence. She would see Eleanor, approach from the casement; and turning away her fierce, dejected, and most beautiful eyes, would affect to be busy within, and send the child to stand ready with the key of the gate; leaving, as it were, no excuse for intrusion. Then, a change took place; something insolent and cheerful dawned in Bridget Owen's manner; she stood idle in the sun, her glossy black hair tied with a red handkerchief, watching the gardener as he planned a garden by the Lodge and trained creepers and roses round the windows. She sate idle in the porch, while an old woman busied herself within and without in the household tasks necessary to be done. The little boy no longer brought the key to Eleanor; the old woman carried it down; or



the gardener, if he was working there, opened the gate.

As she was walking, on her return after the second season she passed in London, Eleanor saw Bridget Owen with a baby in her arms. She stopped and spoke to Sandy, who was busy on a palisade of rustic work, under the gardener's orders.

"Sandy," said she, "whose child is it that Bridget is taking charge of? Is any one ill in the village?"

Sandy paused before he answered, and was long finishing a twist in the interlaced wood.

"Troth, mileddy, I dinna ken," said he at last without looking up, "I'm thinking it's just her ain, or the deevil's!"

Her own! hers; the wife of a felon exiled beyond seas? Eleanor coloured, hesitated, went on a few steps, and then turned back.

She went up the little path to the Lodge, apparently unexpected, for Bridget Owen who had been sitting in the porch, rose hastily with the infant in her arms and continued standing. She had long ceased to offer the respect of a curtsy when Eleanor appeared. The heart of that pure young wife and mother beat fast and faint.

"Whose child are you taking care of, Bridget?" said she.

Here was a moment's silence; and Eleanor's eyes,



which had rested on the infant, were lifted to Bridget's face. She received the answer, and the look with which it was accompanied she never forgot.

"Mine!" said the voice: and the look said, "question me further if you dare!"

Mine. She admitted it. She gave the child a passionate kiss; she looked again at Eleanor; and then she stepped within the threshold of her decorated cottage, with the pride of a gipsy queen. She did not close the door. She knew she had dropped a bar between her and that pale astonished lady, stronger than iron. She had no fear of being followed.

For a minute, Eleanor remained speechless; rooted to the spot; gazing forward, but seeing nothing; then she knew that Bridget's eldest child, the pretty gipsy-looking boy, had stolen to the door, and was watching her; something roguish in his smile perhaps made her think, for moment, that he resembled her little Frederic.

She turned, and rapidly redescended the path. As she did so, her light dress, fluttering, caught on the half-finished fence at which Sandy and the gardener were working. Her back had been towards these men but, in turning to disengage her dress, she suddenly faced them. They were not working at the fence; they were watching her. Keenly, narrowly, with the acute watch of those who never read any books but the looks of their superiors, and read those all day



long and draw their own conclusions. In the gardener's countenance there was only a shrewd cunning, but in poor old Sandy's there was something more. As he came forward to help to disengage her muslin gown, his respect struggled in vain with his sympathy. He had been her father's servant; David Stuart's servant; he remembered her as a child; and the conscious words broke piteously from his lips, "Oh, mileddy, we've a' our trials."

The lady of the Castle shunned her servant's gaze. Her own averted eyes wandered past the garden of the lodge — that little paradise in the rough group of firs — that star of flowers and ornament, by the grim old gateway of her domain — to the open casement where Bridget stood, rocking her infant on her breast. Outside the same window, leaning against it, stood the elder child. The golden sunset fell softly on the group; and Eleanor remembered how she had seen the pretty boy in the same sort of light, the first evening she arrived at the gate of her new home; when Bridget Owen wept — and Eleanor pitied her!

Among the miracles of the working of memory, none perhaps is greater than that power of remaining dormant, which recollections the most vivid and the most important seem to possess. How they entered our minds; where they have been garnered up; why we garnered them at all, not then knowing the weight



we should afterwards attach to them; are secrets known only to Him who framed our complex nature.

As Eleanor turned from the lodge that day, a thousand looks, words, and scenes, crowded on her brain, which she was wholly unconscious of having ever noted while they passed, but which weaved themselves into strange connection with her present impressions. "Remember us," they seemed to say; "we are *the proofs*."

A dark thought haunted Eleanor; a dark thought, which strangely included that bright spot, crowded with flowers; that pretty child; the lodge, and the woman who lived there. And when Sir Stephen came in from shooting on that particular day, he told Eleanor that she looked so pale he thought she must have taken a chill. It was a chill that never left Eleanor's heart — that seemed to freeze her most when her heart was warmest — when she sat by her childrens' cradles.

Her children! Oh, how she loved them, as they lay there in all the beauty of purity; substitutes for the hope of any other love, or any other trust upon earth, within the circle of home — of that home at once the refuge and the prison of her youth!

And from the day when Eleanor had seen Bridget Owen with the infant in her arms, she never made any further attempt to soothe or reason with her. She never stopped to gather flowers from the wild



profusion growing there. She never lingered to caress the little boy. She came seldom that way out of the park; and when she did, it was with a rapid step and downcast eye, as though something evil dwelt there. And of late, Bridget Owen might be seen working on the rustic bench in the garden; and perhaps singing at her work; never heeding or stopping in her song because Eleanor went by, but ordering the old woman down to the gate with the key, and taking it back carelessly, singing as before; and the old woman seemed to be Bridget's servant, and servant to Bridget's children.

So time sped on, till Eleanor had been married between seven and eight years.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### Solicitude.

THEY were at Glencarrick. The sun shone bright on the lake; and the heather lay purple on the hill. The children were at their morning tasks by Eleanor's side, and she had just succeeded in engaging Frederic's attention to his book, after repeated assurances that he could not learn, — "because the voices of the flies disturbs me so, buzzin' about, and it 'minds me of flowers," when Sir Stephen came in.

"Eleanor," said he, "I want the boys; I want



to take them over the hill, to Donald Macpherson's farm."

"Oh, yes! with papa — with papa!" joyously exclaimed the little truant, as he jumped down from his chair, and caught his father's hand.

"Is it not very far for the boys? Do you want them both?" And Eleanor looked anxiously out at the distant spot to which their morning pilgrimage tended.

"Yes, I want them both. I'm sure Clephane is strong enough now; you make a girl and a bookworm of that boy. Janet was saying this morning, that it was quite absurd that he couldn't do what other children of his age are allowed to do with the most perfect impunity."

"I assure you I do not think Clephane is strong enough to walk to Macpherson's and back."

"Well, he can have the pony, and ride and tie with Frederic. There are three or four of my tenants coming over there — there's Pearson from Perth; he's never seen the boys; I want him to see them. We shall be back before sunset. Come along, boys."

Clephane looked wistfully at his mother. She kissed both the children, and said:

"I hope you will not be late; there is a heavy night-dew at this time of year, and it turns so chill in the evening."

"Oh! d—n it," said Sir Stephen impatiently, "the



boy must begin some time or other to do like other boys, and I'll look after him. Janet's going with us, and we shall be back to dinner."

"Now then," called Lady Macfarren's loud voice from the lawn, "are you ready, Stephen? come away! come away, my man Fred; come away, young lady (for you're only half a boy, Clephane); come away dogs, and let's be off for the hill."

They were off; and Eleanor stood and watched them for a while. Little Frederic skipping by his father's side, and Clephane on his pony, and the tall figures of Sir Stephen and his sister, making, as it seemed to Eleanor strides of equal strength through the long heather which fringed the track. She watched them out of sight, and then she closed the little lesson books, and wandered out to sketch; for at Glencarrick she had none of the occupations of Castle Penrhyn; her schools, her poor, and her sick, and the numerous small matters which engage the attention of those who deem that "property has its duties as well as its rights." As she returned, she met Lady Macfarren coming towards the house.

"Are the boys in?" said Eleanor, "I am glad you are back so early in the day."

"There's no one home but myself," said her sister-in-law. They went a little beyond the farm to look at some cattle that were for sale, and that Mr. Pearson



was just mad about; I'd seen all I wanted to see, and so I came away."

"It is a pity they went further, because of Clephane; was he very tired?"

"Oh! he's just spoilt, that's what he is; and I should think Stephen had had enough of him by this time. He's afraid to ride his pony, and he's not able for the walk; and he won't speak out, and have done with it, and be left behind; but keeps looking at his father and me while we're speaking, to see which we want him to do; I never saw such a milksop as that boy, in all my life — I never saw such a poor creeping creature; heaven knows whose blood he's got in his veins. There's not a drop of mine or Stephen's, I'm sure."

"No, he is not at all strong," said Eleanor, with a sigh; and a certain thrill of bitterness passed through her heart, at the image of her weary little boy, watching the countenances of his robust, unloving relatives, to see how he could be least a burden, after having once set out. A burden! her treasure, and her love!

"I wish he had returned with you," she said.

Lady Macfarren gave a short, scornful laugh.

"I'm not very fond of brats, as you know — not even of Stephen's — though Frederic's a nice child enough; and I had no wish to be three hours instead of one, coming over the hill this hot day, I assure you.



No such dawling work for me. I'd send the boy out with a nurse, next time. Indeed I advised Stephen to threaten him."

"To threaten him — threaten Clephane?" said Eleanor, the blood rushing to her cheek; "for what reason?"

"Ah! there's a good deal of hypocrisy and slyness in these sort of children, sometimes. Making themselves of consequence, and pretending they can't do what they can do well enough, and only want to be made to do. If he was mine, I'd flog it out of him in a week."

"Your system did not answer very well with your own."

It was the first exasperated sentence Eleanor had ever flung at her sister-in-law. Lady Macfarren's son had run away from home, and entered the merchant service, writing word (not to his mother, but to Sir Stephen) that he knew he'd entered a hard life, but if he was to be ill-used, he'd rather it should be by strangers. Her colour rose at the taunt, and her eyes flashed fire.

"There's nothing I did to my own," she said, "that I wouldn't do again ten times over, if I had the guiding of him; and I just pray that the pride may be ground out of him; for not a penny will I ever pay to help him, not if he stood there a shivering beggar, and wanted but a crust of bread!" and she swung her



fierce arm round, and pointed to the portico of the house.

Eleanor looked at her with a shudder of repugnance.

"Oh! no one would believe that you had ever been a mother!" said she, as she turned away. "No one would think it possible."

But she-wolves have cubs; and motherhood had not been denied to Lady Macfarren.

"I'll tell you what it is, Lady Penrhyn," said the gaunt woman, coming a step or two nearer her shrinking sister-in-law, "the sooner Clephane, and Frederic too, are taken out of your hands, and put to some good hard school, the better. Who ever heard of a couple of lads of their age sitting perched up, learning reading and writing from a woman? It's time they were weaned of such mother's milk, and so I've told Stephen; and I think you'll find you'll have little more of this coddling home-work. We're going to pack them off to school in Edinburgh."

To school! Frederic — Clephane — her pale, gentle Clephane! Eleanor was startled. She wondered how she could prevent this — this, which she knew to be unnecessary; for David Stuart had given her an education, which made her more than usually able to conduct that of her little sons. She planned all she would say to Sir Stephen to convince him — to persuade him that it would be best for the children to be at home, at least for a year or two longer. She conned over all



the arguments she could think of, as likely to weigh with him; and then she sighed; for she knew that it would depend less on conviction, than on the disposition to thwart and govern her. That strange, instinctive desire to tyrannise in outward circumstances, which comes like a disease to those who feel they have no sway over the mind; that determination to annoy, since they cannot influence; that fierce hope to prove doubtful power, by forbidding, exacting, and compelling; that angry impulse of a narrow soul which answers to the exertion of brute-strength in a school-boy, had too often been evident to Eleanor in her husband, not to teach her that all she could really rely upon, was that he would not care to oppose her in this matter; that he would not think it "worth while."

The silent day wore on, while she thought of these things. The sun glowed over the fair blue hills, glistened among the trembling birch-trees by the lake, and slowly withdrew his farewell-smile to dawn upon other lands. The chill mist rose above the water. Eleanor thought of Clephane, and grew restless.

At length it was all but dark. Lady Macfarren was seated at a table at some distance from her sister-in-law, involved in calculations about the farm, and the cattle they had been viewing.

"I declare it's getting that dark, I can hardly see the lines!" said she.

Then, as if Eleanor's heart had hitherto resisted



the obvious fact that the day was going down, she started, and covering her face with her hands, she murmured:

“Oh, God! something *must* have happened, or they would have been home long ago.”

“Happened? what should happen, and Sir Stephen and the keeper out with the boys? Really, Lady Penrhyn, you’re a silly creature. They’ll have waited to dine, and then they’ll get Macpherson’s dog-cart, and come home that way, and Clephane ’ill be spared any more of his walking and riding.”

So saying, Lady Macfarren rang for lights; and for a while Eleanor curbed her fears to this rational view of the delay. But as time wore on, again the wild alarm woke in her heart — irrepressible — unrepentant. She rose, and walked to and fro by the windows of the large handsome room. She thought of the evening she first arrived; of the no-welcome of her hard fierce sister-in-law on that occasion. She could not tell why that evening returned to memory at that particular moment, unless it were that the absence of all sympathy oppressed her. Perhaps it was that, which made her also think of Margaret: oh, for Margaret’s sweet voice and clasping hand! But Margaret was at Naples.

Eleanor stopped in her restless pacing up and down, and looked out into the night; she thought of that Italy she had never seen, and of what Margaret might be doing at that hour; she looked at the clear



evening-star, and wondered if such stars looked down into the blue Bay of Naples, when Margaret and David Stuart used to sing there together. Oh, Margaret, good, pious, cheerful, beautiful Margaret, what would Eleanor have given for one tender sentence from your lips! The star that she gazed on, grew large and trembled through her tears. She resumed her walk to and fro; she felt like a creature in a cage. Lady Macfarren looked up:

“Will you not be better sitting down, Lady Penrhyn? It’s impossible to count, or do anything, while you’re flitting to and fro in that way.”

“I beg your pardon: I feel uneasy; but indeed, as you say, they will all have dined, and the children will only need putting to bed when they come so I’ll go to my own room, and wait there.”

As Eleanor passed through the hall to the staircase, she saw a group of servants at the open door; poor old Sandy was among them. He turned, and saw her; she paused wistfully:

“We thocht, miledy, may be a’ wasna richt; and there’s a wee laddie gone up Donald Macpherson’s way to know, ’gin Sir Stephen left the farm, whan he left it.”

It was meant to soothe Eleanor, but it deepened her terror; even the servants evidently thought “something must have happened.” The little lad returned; he said the message from the farm was, that Sir Stephen,



and the boys hadn't left till very late, Master Clephane having laid down to rest; that they were to go home a different way, for Mr. Macpherson's car was lent to a neighbouring farmer; and that he thought they 'd be very little after the messenger.

Eleanor was again relieved. She went to her dressing-room, and sate there with renewed patience. Two little silver mugs, the gift of Lord Peebles; some oat-cake and new milk, were set on a table, to await the absentees. Their names were engraved on the cups, with many a careful flourish; and Eleanor half smiled at the recollection of all the Airle's chuckling witticisms, about her hurry to discourage him from any wandering thoughts of matrimony, by bringing two male heirs at once into the family; and the expensive household his cousin Stephen would have to keep up, if that was the way Eleanor intended always to manage matters; and the good example she set the young matrons of the village; with sundry other kindly little fooleries; which wound up with presenting two cups, two corals, two curious old massive spoons, a "double set for the double quantity of company that had unexpectedly arrived at the Castle;" a joke which the Airle repeated to every one for at least two months after the advent of the twins, and always with the same happy little laugh at his own sprightliness.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

THEY would soon be home! Eleanor's courage rose; and with her courage, a wish to remonstrate with Sir Stephen, on his keeping two such young children out, till such a late, undue hour. It was perverse, after all the warnings Eleanor had given; and when he knew Clephane was so delicate. She felt a wish to give a bolder and more reproachful greeting than she had yet ventured upon with her husband. He ought to be more considerate. Then she fell into a train of reflection on the uselessness of reproaches; on the habit so common in the world, of making that a subject of battle and protest with a familiar connection, which would pass off with a polite apology in a stranger. How often the mere foolish fact of being kept waiting, or some equally trivial offence, leads on from one word to another, till a bitter and angry dispute is the result; when the two sentences, "I fear I am late," and "Do not think of it, I beg," would be probably all that would have passed, if the parties had not been *familiar* enough to quarrel. Why should we be ruder to our friends and relations, than to persons indifferent to us?

Eleanor resolved, wisely enough, to avoid such altercation. Reproaching Sir Stephen would not bring back the sunshine of a lost day, lift the dew off the hill, and the darkness off the lake, or undo the mischief



of fatigue and cold, if mischief were already done. They would probably come in chilled and tired; and she would see them put to bed, and delay, till the next expedition, any observation on this past imprudence. She would not be peevish or irritable, because she had been anxious. If there could be no love between her and her husband, let there at least be peace.

It was well that she thought so. It was well that she schooled her heart to be at peace with her husband, for this was no time for bitterness. With a solemn stroke the knell of that anxiety had been tolled, for whose sake she would have been at strife with him! Already, with a hurried trembling tread, the feet of the messenger of evil tidings passed swiftly over the dark heather that lay beyond the house.

Sit yet a little longer, poor mother, and wait in meek expectation to lift the hats from those shining curly heads, and see those rosy lips quaff from the little silver cups; yet a little longer wait — and hope!

The message sent to allay Eleanor's anxiety by Donald Macpherson, was a compound of fact and fiction. The farmer heard with dismay of the non-appearance of Sir Stephen and his sons; and no sooner had he dispatched the messenger, than he hastily mounted his horse and rode to the next farm, where he had lent the car that was to take them home.



"Archie," said the old man as he dismounted, "whar's Sir Stephen?"

"Is he no at the hoose? He suld ha been hame lang syne."

By the Lord, Archie, something 'ill hae gane wrong! Gude save us, and thae twa bonny lads — what 'ill be come to them."

"Hoot, mon, there 'll be no harm come to them. The cairt was no in, and they walkit doon and just tuk boat at the auld boat-house, to cross the loch. The keeper's here with Master Clephane's pony, for Sir Stephen sent him back to abide here, for maybe Mr. Pearson 'ud be glad o' him the morn."

"Mon mon," said the old farmer dolefully, "there's a lad just been o'er the hill frae Glencarrick, that cam straight awa, and Sir Stephen was no at the hoose. It wadna tak four hour, nor the half o't, to talk them hame by the lock. O, mon! Lord send they 're a' safe!"

And the pious old Highlander lifted his bonnet from his grey hair, and looked tremblingly to heaven.

To saddle Clephane's pony, was the work of a few moments, and the two farmers rode together down to the lake side. There was no one in the boat-house: the old boatman had gone with Sir Stephen and the two boys; but as they stood irresolute, not knowing where to turn: no creature within sight: no human habitation within two miles: they spied on a rise of



the hill a woman frantically gesticulating to them: they rode up to her; it was the boatman's wife. The poor old creature clung shivering and shrieking to the mane of Macpherson's rough Shetland.

"Oo! ride roun' the head o' the lock, for the boat's gaed doon!" said she.

It was with difficulty they could get any connected account from her, but it appeared that the boat had been long unused, lying in the sun; that the boatman wanted to fill it to try, before they set sail, but that Sir Stephen was impatient, and said the boat was well enough; that they all got in, and went across rather more than half way, very slowly, for there was scarce any wind, and that not fairly with them — and then — the boat disappeared!

Yes, all had happened as she said. Sir Stephen, already worried by the difficulty with Clephane and his pony, and angry with his sister for quitting the party, spoke with savage impatience to the old boatman, and assisted, himself, in shoving off the boat, and putting up the tiny sail. At first they did well enough; then the boat lagged, and went uneasily through the water: then it became evident that she leaked considerably; a plank must have started.

Sir Stephen put his hand under a rotten board in the flooring, and tore up the planks under his feet.

"Bale it out — bale out the water," shouted he.

Alas! the water was rushing in at more than one



crevice. The light wind played mockingly round them; the sunset lay rosy and still on land and water; the long sweet wooded shore stretched far away, edged with a golden gleam and a fringe of shadows.

Oh! God, were they to die so?

The old boatman's teeth chattered with fear. Sir Stephen hastily undressed; he measured the bright sheet of water with his eye. It was not impossible to swim to land; it could not be more than a mile and a half: he had swum more than that distance for a bet, and he was to swim now for his life. His life! ay, and his childrens' lives. No, not his children — a child: he felt it could be but one — it was a chance even with that one. The clinging weight of a child of six years old, to a man swimming, is heavy odds.

Oh! terrible moment — oh, hour of strange and insupportable horror! And the water sucking the boat down, and no time to deliberate — no time for anything but quick instinct. It all passed through his mind in less time than it takes to read; as he tore off his clothes, and the heavy boat, water-logged, rocked under him. His eyes looked wildly on Clephane; with pity, with horror; the pale little face was marble white; a soft strange appealing smile came over it.

“Never mind me, papa; save Freddy; the boatman will take me.”



“Oh Clephane! — oh, my boy! — oh, God! your mother!”

But a wild scream from Frederic caused the father to turn. His lovely favourite had just comprehended, in the gush of water that filled the boat, the full extent of his danger. He sprang towards his father! There was no time to undo the fastenings of his dress: his head was bare. Sir Stephen pulled off his shoes, and swung him on his naked back.

“Put your arms round my neck, Fred; don’t be frightened — don’t let go.”

They were in the water!

As the boat sank, Sir Stephen heard the voice of Clephane. He had even then a consciousness of dreading to hear another bitter scream, such as Frederic had given a minute before. He heard no scream, but he heard the voice of the child in a loud, plaintive tone; it said:

“Our Father which art in Heaven!”

He saw its face for a moment; not looking for help — looking upwards; he saw its hand, trying to grasp something, some rope or portion of the sail, something attached to the boat. He saw the old boatman, as in a dream, take the boy in his arms; he saw nothing more — he was striking out for his life, and Frederic’s life.

Give him strength — oh, God! He so strong, he



so proud of his strength! Will it ever enable him to reach the shore?

Loosen your clutch dear frightened, childish arms, closed so tight round your father's throat while he pants for breath! Do not be terrified; do not shriek in his ear, as he breasts the water with an effort; getting wearied; do not wail out the words "Clephane — my darlin' Clephane," like a sound of doom over the lake! Be quiet, dear boy; that's right; don't fear; hold firm — we shall do it yet.

The shore! — the dim shore — the dim, distant shore; it is nearer — he can distinguish cottages, though they gleam but white specks. Oh, help! oh, help! he faints! No — he rests on the water. Is he to live? is he to die? What a weight, this child — this poor bewildered child! Do not kiss your father's neck with chill wet lips, poor little one! It torments, it unmans, even him! Be quiet, do not fear: hold firm.

Swim on — strike out! He can see the windows of the cottages, sparkling like jewels in the sunset light. The shore is nearing fast. It is certainly nearing! But Sir Stephen is getting very faint. That magnificent athletic form strains every muscle for life, for dear life! Will he or Death win the race?

Swim on — strike out — rest a little. His eyes are getting dim; the rolling as of distant thunder is in his ears; his head and shoulders sink too low, and



his child is choking with the water; its wet dress flaps on its face; the father is getting feeble, very feeble. He does not see the shore; he sees nothing real; he sees his home, as in a vision, and Eleanor getting the news. Is he drowning?

What, what was that sound? that shout, that wild, dim echo from some living world of safety, that smites him in his death hour? Where does it come from? What has it to do with him? They see him — they see him from the cottages! Help him! save him! even if you can't swim, wade to him — fling ropes — get a boat — get him in — help! He is so near now you can surely reach him by the hair, by the child's dress; by the knotted handkerchief: seize and help!

It is done; he is on the land once more; among wet, struggling, dripping, breathless men. He does not see them; he does not hear them; he does not feel the shingled beach against his torn and bleeding skin — that stranded majestic statute of a man. He lies motionless — senseless — exhausted: not dead — no, not dead! God is very merciful. Untie the little child; unclasp its arms. No, no, carry them both in together, to the warmth of the fire in one of the cottages; chafe him well, and lift the child away. He sees — he speaks! he knows one of the men. Stand away — let him speak to the man he knows.

“We've had a sad accident. Take care of the child! Ah! Frederic, we've had a tussle for it; we



must put a little life into you now, my boy!" The father smiles a faint smile.

Put a little life into him! Put a little life into him! Why are they all so still and sad? Put the long wet hair off his lovely little face! His eyes are not quite closed, nor yet open. He has fainted, with the chill washing over of the waters so often, in the long struggling way. Chafe him as he lies on the knees of the cottar's wife, his beautiful limbs freed now from the cold soaked dress; naked and free as the limbs of the strong man, who saved the child's life and his own by that feat of unrivalled swimming! Chafe him, and be careful of him, and wrap him up warm and softly, that he may be carried to his poor mother and comfort her! Why are you all so slack? What ails you all? Stand by; let the father look at his child!

Well?

His child is dead. His child is a little lovely corpse!

Both his children are dead: the one he sought to save, and the one he left to die. Both! And they tell it to Eleanor; and she comprehends what has fallen upon her that fearful day!

In the morning she was the mother of living children, and in the evening of departed souls!























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